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# DE QUINCEY ON SELF-EDUCATION,

ETC.

# ON STYLE

AND

# CONVERSATION

A SERIES OF ESSAYS

BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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EDINBURGH: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Essays on kindred subjects have been selected from the works of Mr De Quincey.

In justice to the Author's memory it may be necessary to mention, that "The Letters" appear here in their original form, without the extension and revision which it was his intention to have given them.

EDINBURGH, 1862.

# LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN

WHOSE EDUCATION HAS BEEN NEGLECTED.

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## LETTER I.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I had the pleasure of meeting you at Ch—, for the second time in my life, I was much concerned to remark the general dejection of your manner. I may now add, that I was also much surprised; your cousin's visit to me having made it no longer a point of delicacy to suppress that feeling. General report had represented you as in possession of all which enters into the worldly estimate of happiness —great opulence, unclouded reputation, and freedom from unhappy connexions. That you had the priceless blessing of unfluctuating health, I know upon your own authority. And the concurring opinions of your friends, together with my own opportunities for observation, left me no room to doubt that you wanted not the last and mightiest among the sources of happiness—a fortunate con-

stitution of mind, both for moral and intellectual ends. So many blessings as these, meeting in the person of one man, and yet all in some mysterious way defeated and poisoned, presented a problem too interesting, both to the selfish and the generous curiosity of men, to make it at all wonderful that at that time and place you should have been the subject of much discussion. Now and then some solutions of the mystery were hazarded; in particular, I remember one from a young lady of seventeen, who said, with a positive air, "That Mr. M—'s dejection was well known to arise from an unfortunate attachment in early life," which assurance appeared to have great weight with some other young ladies of sixteen. But, upon the whole, I think that no account of the matter was proposed at that time which satisfied myself, or was likely to satisfy any reflecting person.

At length the visit of your cousin L—, in his road to Th—, has cleared up the mystery in a way more agreeable to myself than I could have ventured to anticipate, from any communication short of that which should acquaint me with the entire dispersion of the dejection under which you laboured. I allow myself to call such a disclosure agreeable, partly upon the ground that where the grief or dejection of our friends admits of no important alleviation, it is yet satisfactory to know that it may be traced to causes of adequate

dignity; and, in this particular case, I have not only that assurance, but the prospect of contributing some assistance to your emancipation from these depressing recollections, by co-operating with your own efforts in the way you have pointed out for supplying the defects of your early education.

L— explained to me all that your own letter had left imperfect; in particular, how it was that you came to be defrauded of the education to which even your earliest and humblest prospects had entitled you; by what heroic efforts, but how vainly, you laboured to repair that greatest of losses; what remarkable events concurred to raise you to your present state of prosperity; and all other circumstances which appeared necessary to put me fully in possession of your present wishes and intentions.

The two questions which you addressed to me through him I have answered below: these were questions which I could answer easily and without meditation; but for the main subject of our future correspondence, it is so weighty, and demands such close attention (even as *I* find, who have revolved the principal points almost daily for many years), that I would willingly keep it wholly distinct from the hasty letter which I am now obliged to write; on which account it is that I shall forbear to enter at present upon the series of letters

which I have promised, even if I should find that my time were not exhausted by the answers to your *two questions below.*

To your first question,—Whether to you, with your purposes and at your age of thirty-two, a residence at either of our English universities, or at any foreign university, can be of much service? — my answer is, firmly and unhesitatingly, No. The majority of the undergraduates of your own standing, in an academic sense; will be your juniors by twelve or fourteen years; a disparity of age which could not but make your society mutually burthensome. What, then, is it that you would seek in a university? Lectures? These, whether public or private, are surely the very worst modes of acquiring any sort of accurate knowledge; and are just as much inferior to a good book on the same subject, as that book hastily read aloud, and then immediately withdrawn, would be inferior to the same book left in your possession, and open at any hour, to be consulted, retraced, collated, and in the fullest sense studied. But, besides this, university lectures are naturally adapted, not so much to the general purpose of communicating knowledge, as to the specific purpose of meeting a particular form of examination for degrees, and a particular profession to which the whole course of the education is known to be directed. The two single advantages

which lectures can ever acquire, to balance those which they forego, are either, *first*, the obvious one of a better apparatus for displaying illustrative experiments than most students can command; and the cases where this becomes of importance it cannot be necessary to mention; *second*, the advantage of a rhetorical delivery, when *that* is of any use (as in lectures on poetry, &c.) These, however, are advantages more easily commanded in a great capital than in the most splendid university. What, then, remains to a university, except its libraries? And with regard to those the answer is short: to the greatest of them undergraduates have not free access; to the inferior ones (of their own college, &c.) the libraries of the great capitals are often equal or superior; and, for mere purposes of study, your own private library is far preferable to the Bodleian or the Vatican. To you, therefore, a university can offer no attraction except on the assumption that you see cause to adopt a profession; and, as a degree from some university, would, in that case, be useful (and indispensable except for the bar), your determination on this first question must still be dependent on that which you form upon the second.

In this second question, you call for my opinion upon the eleventh chapter of Mr. Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, as applied to the circumstances in which you yourself are placed. This

chapter, to express its substance in the most general terms, is a dissuasion from what Herder, in a passage there quoted, calls "Die Authorschaft;" or, as Mr. Coleridge expresses it, "the trade of authorship;" and the amount of the advice is,—that, for the sake of his own happiness and respectability, every man should adopt some trade or profession, and should make literature a subordinate pursuit. On this advice, I understand you to ask, *first*, whether it is naturally to be interpreted, as extending to cases such as yours; and, *second*, if so, what is my judgment on such advice so extended? As to my judgment upon this advice, supposing it addressed to men of your age and situation, you will easily collect, from all which I shall say, that I think it as bad as can well be given.

Waiving this, however, and to consider your other question—in what sense, and with what restrictions, the whole chapter is to be interpreted—that is a point which I find it no easy matter to settle. Mr. Coleridge, who does not usually offend by laxity and indecision of purpose, has, in this instance, allowed the very objects of his advice to shift and fluctuate before him; and, from the beginning to the end, nothing is firmly constructed for the apprehension to grasp, nor are the grounds of judgment steadily maintained. From the title of the chapter (an affectionate exhortation to those

who in early life feel themselves disposed to come authors), and, from the express words of Herder, in the passage cited from him as the final words of the chapter, which words discountenance "authorship" only as "zu früh oder unmässig gebraucht" (practised too early, or with too little temperance), it would have been a natural presumption that Mr. Coleridge's counsels regarded chiefly or altogether the case of very youthful authors, and the unfortunate thirst for premature distinction. And if this had been the purpose of the chapter, excepting that the evil involved in such a case is not very great, and is generally intercepted by the difficulties which prevent, and overpunished by the mortifications which attend any such juvenile acts of presumption, there could have been no room for differing with Mr. Coleridge, except upon the propriety of occupying his great powers with topics of such trivial interest. But this, though from the title it naturally should have been, is *not* the evil, or any part of it, which Mr. Coleridge is contemplating. What Mr. Coleridge really has in his view are two most different objections to literature, as the principal pursuit of life; which, as I have said, continually alternate with each other as the objects of his arguments, and sometimes become perplexed together, though incapable of blending into any real coalition. The objections urged are: *First*, To literature con-

sidered as a means of livelihood; as any part of the resources which a man should allow himself to rely on for his current income, or worldly credit and respectability. Here the evils anticipated by Mr. Coleridge are of a high and positive character, and such as tend directly to degrade the character, and indirectly to aggravate some heavy domestic evils. *Second*, To literature considered as the means of sufficiently occupying the intellect. Here the evil apprehended is an evil of defect; it is alleged that literature is not adequate to the main end of giving due and regular excitement to the mind and the spirits, unless combined with some other summons to mental exercise of periodical recurrence — determined by an overruling cause, acting from without — and not dependent, therefore, on the accidents of individual will, or the caprices of momentary feeling springing out of temper or bodily health. Upon the last objection, as by far the most important in any case, and the only one at all applicable to yours, I would wish to say a word; because my thoughts on that matter are from the abundance of my heart, and drawn up from the very depths of my own experience. If there has ever lived a man who might claim the privilege of speaking with emphasis and authority on this great question,—By what means shall a man best support the activity of his own mind in solitude? — I probably am

that man; and upon this ground, that I have passed more of my life in absolute and unmitigated solitude, voluntarily, and for intellectual purposes, than any person of my age whom I have ever met with, heard of, or read of. With such pretensions, what is it that I offer as the result of my experience, and how far does it coincide with the doctrine of Mr. Coleridge? Briefly this: I wholly agree with him that literature, in the proper acceptation of the term, as denoting what is otherwise called *Belles Lettres*, &c. — that is, the most eminent of the fine arts, and so understood, therefore, as to exclude *all science* whatsoever — is not, to use a Greek word, *αὐταρκης*, — not self-sufficing; no, not even when the mind is so far advanced that it can bring what have hitherto passed for merely literary or *æsthetic* questions under the light of philosophic principles; when problems of "taste" have expanded to problems of human nature. And why? Simply for this reason, that our power to exercise the faculties on such subjects is not, as it is on others, in defiance of our own spirits; the difficulties and resistances to our progress in these investigations are not susceptible of minute and equable partition (as in mathematics); and, therefore, the movements of the mind cannot be continuous, but are either of necessity tumultuary and *per saltum*, or none at all. When, on the contrary, the difficulty is pretty equally dis-

persed and broken up into a series of steps, no one of which demands any exertion sensibly more intense than the rest, nothing is required of the student beyond that sort of application and coherent attention which, in a sincere student of any standing, may be presumed as a habit already and inveterately established. The dilemma, therefore, to which a student of pure literature is continually reduced — such a student, suppose, as the Schlegels, or any other man who has cultivated no acquaintance with the severer sciences — is this: either he studies literature as a mere man of taste, and perhaps also as a philologer — and in that case his understanding must find a daily want of some masculine exercise to call it out and give it play — or (which is the rarest thing in the world) having begun to study literature as a philosopher, he seeks to renew that elevated walk of study at all opportunities; but this is often as hopeless an effort as to a great poet it would be to sit down upon any predetermination to compose in his character of poet. Hence, therefore, if (as too often it happens) he has not cultivated those studies (mathematics, *e. g.*) which present such difficulties as will bend to a resolute effort of the mind, and which have the additional recommendation that they are apt to stimulate and irritate the mind to make that effort, he is often thrown by the very cravings of an un-

satisfied intellect, and not by passion or inclination, upon some vulgar excitement of business or pleasure, which becomes constantly more necessary to him.

I should do injustice to myself if I were to say that I owed this view of the case solely to my own experience; the truth is, I easily foresaw, upon the suggestion almost of an instant, that literature would not suffice for my mind with my purposes. I foresaw this, and I provided for it from the very first; but how? *Not* in the way recommended by Mr. Coleridge, but according to a plan which you will collect from the letters I am to write, and which, therefore, I need not here anticipate. What, however, you will say (for *that* is the main inquiry), what has been the success? Has it warranted me to look back upon my past life, and to pronounce it upon the whole a happy one? I answer in calmness, and with sincerity of heart, Yes. To you, with your knowledge of life, I need not say that it is a vain thing for any man to hope that he can arrive at my age without many troubles; every man has his own, and more especially he who has not insulated himself in this world, but has formed attachments and connexions, and has thus multiplied the avenues through which his peace is assailable. But, setting aside these inevitable deductions, I assure you that the great account of my days, if summed up,

would present a great overbalance of happiness; and of happiness during those years which I lived in solitude, of necessity derived exclusively from intellectual sources. Such an evil, indeed, as time hanging heavy on my hands, I never experienced for a moment. On the other hand, to illustrate the benefits of my plan by a picture of the very opposite plan, though pursued under the most splendid advantages, I would direct your eyes to the case of an eminent living Englishman, with talents of the first order, and yet, upon the evidence of all his works, ill-satisfied at any time either with himself or those of his own age. This Englishman set out in life, as I conjecture, with a plan of study modelled upon that of Leibnitz; that is to say, he designed to make himself (as Leibnitz most truly was) a *Polyhistor*, or Catholic student. For this reason, and because at a very early age I had become familiar with the writings of Leibnitz, I have been often tempted to draw a parallel between that eminent German and the no less eminent Englishman of whom I speak. In many things they agreed; these I shall notice at some other opportunity; only in general I will say, that, as both had minds not merely powerful, but distinguished for variety and compass of power, so in both were these fine endowments completed and accomplished for works of Herculean endurance and continuity, by the alliance of a bodily con-

stitution resembling that of horses. They were centaurs; heroic intellects with brutal capacities of body. What partiality in nature! In general, a man has reason to think himself well off in the great lottery of this life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind, or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach; but that any man should draw both is truly astonishing, and, I suppose, happens only once in a century. Thus far (as, indeed, much further) they agreed. The points of difference were many, and not less remarkable. Two I shall allege as pertinent to the matter before me. First, I remarked that Leibnitz, however anxious to throw out his mind upon the whole encyclopædia of human research, yet did not forget to pay the price at which only any *right* to be thus discursive can be earned. He sacrificed to the austerer muses. Knowing that God geometrizes eternally, he rightly supposed that in the universal temple Mathesis must furnish the master-key which would open most shrines. The Englishman, on the contrary, I remarked to have been too self-indulgent, and almost a voluptuary in his studies; sparing himself all toil, and thinking, apparently, to evade the necessity of artificial power by an extraordinary exertion of his own native power. Neither as a boy nor as a man had he submitted to any regular study or discipline of thought. His choice of subjects

had lain too much amongst those dependent upon politics, or rather fleeting interests; and, when this had not happened, yet never amongst those which admitted of *continuous* thinking and study, and which support the spirits by perpetual influxes of pleasure, from the constant sense of success and difficulty overcome. As to the use of books, the German had been a discursive reader, — the Englishman a desultory reader.

Secondly, I remarked that Leibnitz was always cheerful and obliging, most courteous and communicative to his fellow-labourers in literature or science; with a single exception (which rests, I think, as the sole stain upon his memory), just, and even generously just, to the claims of others; uncensorious, and yet patient of censure; willing to teach, and most willing to be taught. Our English contemporary was not, I think, naturally less amiable than Leibnitz; and therefore I ascribe it to his unfortunate plan of study — leaving him, of necessity, too often with no subjects for intellectual exertion but such as cannot be pursued successfully, unless in a state of genial spirits — that we find him continually in ill-humour, distempered and untuned with uncharitable feelings; directing too harsh and acrimonious a spirit of criticism always against the age in which he lives, sometimes even

against individuals; querulous * under criticism, almost to the extent of believing himself the object of conspiracies and organized persecution; finally (which to me is far the gloomiest part of the picture), he neither will consent to believe that any man of his own age (at least of his own country) can teach *him* anything,—professing all his obligations to those *who are dead*, or else to some rusty old German; nor, finally, will he consent to teach others, with the simple-minded magnanimity of a scholar, who should not seek to mystify and perplex his pupil, or to illuminate only with half-lights, nor put himself on his guard against his reader, or against a per-

* That this appears on the very face of his writings, may be inferred from a German work, published about two years ago, by a Hamburg barrister (I think)—Mr. Jacobs. The subject of the book is, the Modern Literature of England, with the lives, etc., of the most popular authors. It is made up in a great measure from English literary journals, but not always; and in the particular case of the author now alluded to, Mr. Jacobs imputes to him not merely too lively a sensitiveness to censure, but absolutely a "*Wasserscheue*" (hydrophobia) with regard to reviewers and critics. How Mr. Jacobs came to use so strong an expression, or this particular expression, I cannot guess; unless it were that he had happened to see (which, however, does not appear) in a work of this eloquent Englishman the following picturesque sentence: "By an unconscionable extension of the old adage, '*Noscitur a socio*,' my friends are never under the waterfall of criticism, but I must be wet through with the spray." *Spray*, indeed! I wish some of us knew no more of these angry cataracts than their spray.

son seeking to grow as knowing as himself, On the contrary, who should rejoice to believe—if he could believe it—that all the world knew as much as himself; and should adopt as his motto (which I make it my pride to have done from my earliest days) the simple grandeur of that line in Chaucer's description of *his* scholar:

"That gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

Such were the two features of difference which I had occasion perpetually to remark between two great scholars, in many other features so closely resembling each other. In general these two features would be thought to exist independently; but, with my previous theory of the necessity, in all cases, that with studies of so uncertain and even morbid an effect upon the spirits as literature, should be combined some analytic exercise of *inevitable* healthy action, in this respect it was natural that *I* should connect them in my mind as cause and effect; and, in that view, they gave a double attention to Mr. Coleridge's advice where it agrees with mine, and to mine where it differs from his.

Thus far I have considered Mr. Coleridge's advice simply as it respects the student. But the object of his studies is also entitled to some consideration. If it were better for the literary body that all should pursue a profession as their ἐργον

(or business), and literature as a παρεργον (an accessary, or mere by-business), how far is literature itself likely to benefit by such an arrangement? Mr. Coleridge insists upon it that it will; and at page 225 he alleges seven names, to which at page 233 he adds an eighth, of celebrated men, who "have shown the possibility of combining weighty performances in literature with full and independent employment." On various grounds it would be easy, I think, to cut down the list, as a list any way favourable for Mr. Coleridge's purpose, to one name, viz., that of Lord Bacon. But, waiving his examples, let us consider his arguments. The main business, the ἐργον, after exhausting a man's powers during the day, is supposed to leave three hours at night for the παρεργον. Now we are to consider that our bright ideal of a literatus may chance to be married,—in fact Mr. Coleridge agrees to allow him a wife. Let us suppose a wife, therefore; and the more so, because else he will perhaps take one without our permission. I ask, then, what portion of these three hours is our student to give up to the pleasure of his wife's company at any time, I take it for granted that he would wish to spend the evening with her. Well, if you think so (says Mr. Coleridge, in effect, who had at first supposed the learned man to "retire into his study"), in fact he need *not* retire. How

then? Why, he is to study, not in his study, but in his drawing-room, whilst "the social silence, or undisturbing voices of a wife or sister, will be like a restorative atmosphere." Silence, by the way, is a strange mode of social pleasure. I know not what Mr. Coleridge does when he sits with a young woman; for my part, I do "*mon possible*" to entertain her, both with my wit and my wisdom; and am happy to hear *her* talk, even though she should chance to be my own wife; and never think of tolerating silence for one instant. But, not to quarrel about tastes, what is this "sister" that so pleasantly intrudes herself into the party? The wife, I understand; but, in the north of England, or any place where I have lived, wives do not commonly present men with sisters, but with children. Suppose, then, our student's wife should give him a son; or, what is noisier, a daughter; or, what is noisier than either, both? What's to be done then? Here's a worshipful audience for a philosopher! — here's a promising company for "undisturbing voices," and "social silence!" I admire Mr. Coleridge's way of blinking this question, of masking this youthful battery with "a sister." Children, however, are incidents that do and will occur in this life, and must not be blinked. I have seen the case again and again; and I say it, and say it with pain, that there is no more respect for

philosophy amongst that lively part of society than Mr. Coleridge and I have for French philosophy. They may, however, be banished to their nursery. True; but if they are ever admitted to the drawing-room, in houses where not so much company is kept, I observe that this visit is most interesting to all parties in the evening; and if they would otherwise be admitted, no good-natured student would wish to have their expulsion charged upon his books. After all, however, it is clear that Mr. Coleridge's voice is for the "retiring" system; and he gives us pretty plainly to understand (p. 230) that it is far better for men to be separated from their wives throughout the day. But, in saying this, he forgets that, in the case under consideration, the question is not so properly, whether they are ever to be separated, as whether they are ever to meet. Indeed, taking what Mr. Coleridge says on the subject as addressed to literary men especially, I know not why they should be supposed likely to make unhappy marriages more than other men. They are not called upon to pass more of their time with their wives than country gentlemen, or men generally without a profession. On the other hand, if we are to understand the words of Mr. Coleridge as of universal application, I hope that he gives us a very unfair view of the average tenor of life in this important particular. Yet, if it be settled that men will

quarrel, and must quarrel with their wives, or their wives with them, unless separated, would not a large screen meet the emergency? Or, might not the learned man, as soon as breakfast is ended, bow to his wife and withdraw to his library, where he might study or be sulky according to his taste, leaving her for the rest of the day to amuse or to employ herself in the way most agreeable to her sex, rank, and previous education? But in whatever way this difficulty may be disposed of, one point is clear to my judgment: that literature must decay unless we have a class *wholly* dedicated to that service,—not pursuing it as an amusement only, with wearied and pre-occupied minds. The reproach of being a "*nation boutiquière*," now so eminently inapplicable to the English, would become indeed just, and in the most unfortunate sense just, if, from all our overstocked trades and professions, we could not spare men enough to compose a garrison on permanent duty for the service of the highest purposes which grace and dignify our nature.

You will not infer from all this, any abatement in my old respect for Mr. Coleridge's great and various powers; no man admires them more. But there is no treason, I hope, in starting a little game now and then from the thickets of *The Friend*, the *Biographia Literaria*, or even from Mr Coleridge's *Sermons*, considering that they

are *Lay* ones. Young men must have some exercise this frosty weather. Hereafter I shall have occasion to break a lance with Mr. Coleridge on more difficult questions; and very happy I shall be if the amusement which I shall make it my business to strike out, by my hammering, from the flinty rock of his metaphysics, should either tempt any one to look into his valuable writings, or should tempt Mr. Coleridge to sally out of his hiding-place into a philosophic passion, and to attack me with the same freedom. Such an exhibition must be amusing to the public. I conceive that two transcendentalists, who are also two ——s, can hardly ever before have stripped in any ring. But, by the way, I wish he would leave transcendentalism to me and other young men; for, to say the truth, it does not prosper in his hands. *I* will take charge of the public principles in that point, and he will thus be more at leisure to give us another *Ancient Mariner*, which, I will answer for it, the whole literary body would receive with gratitude and a fervent "plaudite."

## LETTER II.

OUTLINE OF THE WORK—NOTICE OF FORMER WRITERS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

MY DEAR M.—IN this, my second and last letter of preface, I shall settle the idea and the arrangement of my papers. There will be in all about seven, of which four will exhibit the material on which the student is to work; the other three, the tools with which the workmanship is to be conducted. First, *what* is to be done, and, secondly, *how*, is the natural and obvious distribution of the work; that is to say, the business is to assign, first, the end, and, secondly, the means. And, because the end should reasonably determine the means, it would seem natural that, in the arrangement of the work, all which relates to *that* should have precedency. Nevertheless, I mean to invert this order, and for the following reason: All that part of the means, which are so entirely determined by the end as to presuppose its full and circumstantial development, may be concluded specially restricted to that individual end. In proportion to this restriction they will, therefore, be of narrow application, and are best treated in direct connexion, and concurrently with the object to which they are thus appropriated. On the other hand, those means or

instruments of thought, which are sufficiently complex and important to claim a separate attention to themselves, are usually of such large and extensive use that they belong indifferently to all schemes of study, and may safely be premised in any plan, however novel in its principles or peculiar in its tendencies. What are these general instruments of study? According to my view they are three,—first, Logic; secondly, Languages; thirdly, Arts of Memory. With respect to these, it is not necessary that any special end should be previously given. Be his end what it may, every student must have thoughts to arrange, knowledge to transplant, and facts to record. Means which are thus universally requisite may safely have precedency of the end; and it will not be a preposterous order, if I dedicate my first three letters to the several subjects of Logic, Languages, and Arts of Memory, which will compose one half of my scheme, leaving to the other half the task of unfolding the course of study for which these instruments will be available. Having thus settled the arrangement, and implicitly, therefore, settled in part the idea or *ratio* of my scheme, I shall go on to add what may be necessary to confine your expectations to the right track, and prevent them from going above or below the true character of the mark I aim at. I profess, then, to attempt something much higher than merely directions for

a course of reading. Not that such a work might not be of eminent service; and in particular at this time, and with a constant adaptation to the case of rich men, not literary, I am of opinion that no more useful book could be executed than a series of letters (addressed, for example, to country gentlemen, merchants, &c.) on the formation of a library. The uses of such a treatise, however, are not those which I contemplate; for, either it would presume and refer to a plan of study already settled—and in that light it is a mere complement of the plan I propose to execute—or else it would attempt to *involve* a plan of study in the course of reading suggested; and *that* would be neither more nor less than to do *in concreto*, what it is far more convenient, as well as more philosophical, to do (as I am now going to do) directly and *in abstracto*. A mere course of reading, therefore, is much below what I propose; on the other hand, an organon of the human understanding is as much above it. Such a work is a labour for a life; that is to say, though it may take up but a small part of every day, yet could it in no other way accumulate its materials than by keeping the mind everlastingly on the watch, to seize upon such notices as may arise daily throughout a life, under the favour of accident or occasion. Forty years are not too large a period for such a work; and my present work, however

maturely meditated must be executed with rapidity. Here, in fact, I do but sketch or trace in outline (ὡς ἐν τυπῳ περιλαβειν) what there it would become my duty to develop, to fill up in detail, to apply, and to illustrate on the most extensive scale.

After having attempted in my first part to put you in possession of the best method for acquiring the *instruments* of study; and, with respect to logic in particular, having directed a philosophic light upon its true meaning and purpose, with the hope of extinguishing that anarchy of errors which have possessed this ground from the time of Lord Bacon to the moment at which I write,—I then, in the second division, address myself to the question of *ends*. Upon which word let me distinguish: upon ends, in an absolute sense, as ultimate ends, it is presumption in any man to offer counsel to another of mature age. Advice of that sort, given under whatever hollow pretences of kindness, is to be looked upon as arrogance in the most repulsive shape; and to be rejected with that sort of summary disdain, which any man not of servile nature would testify towards him who should attempt to influence his choice of a wife. A student of mature age must be presumed to be best acquainted with his own talents and his own intellectual infirmities, with his "forte" and his "foible," with his own former

experience of failure or success, and with the direction in which his inclinations point. Far be it from me to violate by the spirit of my counsels a pride so reasonable, which, in truth I hold sacred. My scheme takes an humbler ground. *Ends*, indeed, in a secondary sense, the latter half professes to deal with; but such ends as, though bearing that character in relation to what is purely and merely instrumental, yet again become *means* in relation to ends absolutely so called. The *final* application of your powers and knowledge it is for yourself only to determine; my pretensions in regard to that election are limited to this,—that I profess to place you on a vantage ground from which you may determine more wisely, by determining from a higher point of survey. My purpose is not to map the whole course of your journey, but to serve as your guide to that station at which you may be able to lay down your future route for yourself. The former half of my work I have already described to you; the latter half endeavours to construct such a system of study as shall combine these two advantages: 1. Systematic unity; that is, such a principle of *internal* connexion, as that the several parts of the plan shall furnish assistance interchangeably. 2. The largest possible compass of *external* relations. Some empires, you know, are built for growth; others are essentially im-

progressive, but are built for duration, on some principle of strong internal cohesion. Systems of knowledge, however, and schemes of study, should propose both ends: they should take their foundations broad and deep,

"And lay great bases for eternity,"

which is the surest key to internal and systematic connection; and, secondly, they should provide for future growth and accretion, regarding all knowledge as a nucleus and centre of accumulation for other knowledge. It is on this latter principle, by the way, that the system of education in our public schools, however otherwise defective, is justly held superior to the specious novelties of our surburban academies; for it is more radical, and adapted to a larger superstructure. Such, I say, is the character of my scheme; and, by the very act of claiming for it, as one of its benefits, that it leaves you in the *centre* of large and comprehensive relations to other parts of knowledge, it is pretty apparent that I do not presume to suggest in what direction of these manifold relations you should afterwards advance; *that*, as I have now sufficiently explained, will be left to your own self-knowledge; but to your self-knowledge illumined at the point where I leave you by that other knowledge which my scheme of study professes to communicate.

From this general outline of my own plan, I am led by an easy transition to a question of yours, respecting the merits of the most celebrated amongst those who have trod the same ground in past times. Excepting only a little treatise of Erasmus, *De Ratione Studii*, all the essays on this subject by eminent continental writers appeared in the seventeenth century; and, of these, a large majority before the year 1640. They were universally written in Latin; and, the Latin of that age being good, they are so far agreeable to read; beyond this, and the praise of elegance in their composition and arrangement, I have not much to say in their behalf. About the year 1645, Lewis Elzevir published a *corpus* of these essays, amounting in all to four-and-twenty. In point of elegance and good sense, their merits are various; thus far they differ; but, in regard to the main point, they hold a lamentable equality of pretension—being all thoroughly hollow and barren of any practical use.* I cannot give you a

* Not for the sake of any exception in its favour from the general censure here pronounced on this body of essays, but for its extraordinary tone of passion and frantic energy, and at times of noble sentiment eloquently expressed, I must notice, as by far the most memorable of these essays of the seventeenth century, that of Joachim Forz Ringelberg, *On the Method of Study*, (De Ratione Studii). It is one of those books which have been written most evidently not merely by a madman (as many thousands have), but by a madman under a high paroxysm of his malady; and, omitting a few

better notion of their true place and relation to the class of works of which you are in search, than by an analogy drawn from the idea of didactic poetry, as it exists in the Roman literature and our own. So thoroughly is this sometimes misunderstood, that I have seen it insisted on as a merit in a didactic poem, that the art which it professed to deliver might be learned and practised in all its technicalities, without other assistance than that which the poem supplied. But, had this been true, so far from being a praise, it would instantly have degraded the poem from its rank as a work among the products of

instances of affectation and puerility, it is highly affecting. It appears that the author, though not thirty years of age at the date of his book, was afflicted with the gravel—according to his belief, incurably; and much of the book was actually written in darkness (on waxen tablets, or on wooden tablets, with a *stylus* formed of charred bones), during the sleepless nights of pain consequent upon his disease. "Ætas abiit," says he, "reditura nunquam—Ah! nunqam reditura! Tametsi annum nunc solum trigesimum ago, spem tamen ademit calculi morbus." And again: "Sic interim meditantem calculi premunt, ut gravi ipsa dolore mœreat mens, et plerumque noctes abducat insomnes angor." Towards the end it is that he states the remarkable circumstances under which the book was composed. "Bonam partem libri hujus in tenebris scripsi, quando somnus me ob calculi dolorem reliquerat; idque quum sol adversa nobis figeret vestigia, nocte vagante in medio cœlo. Deerat lumen; verum tabula habeo, quibus etiam in tenebris utor." It is singular that so interesting a book should nowhere have been noticed to my knowledge in English literature, except, indeed, in a slight and inaccurate way, by Dr. Vicesimus Knox, in his Winter Evening Lucubrations.

Fine Arts; *ipso facto*, such a poem would have settled down from that high intellectual rank into the ignoble pretensions of mechanic art, in which the metre, and the style which metre introduces, would immediately have lost their justification. The true idea of didactic poetry is this: either the poet selects an art which furnishes the *occasion* for a series of picturesque exhibitions (as Virgil, Dyer, &c.); and, in that case, it is true that he derives part of his power from the art which he delivers; not, however, from what is essential to the art, but from its accidents and adjuncts. Either he does this, or else (as is the case with Lord Roscommon, Pope, &c.), so far from seeking in his subject for any part of the *power*, he seeks in *that* only for the *resistance* with which he contends by means of the power derived from the verse and the artifices of style. To one case or other of this alternative all didactic poems are reducible; and, allowing for the differences of rhetoric and poetry, the same ideal must have presided in the composition of the various essays of the seventeenth century, addressed to students; the subject was felt to be austere and unattractive, and almost purely scholastic; it was the ambition of the writers, therefore, to show that they could present it in a graceful shape; and that under their treatment the subject might become interesting to the reader, as an arena, upon which skill was exhibited, baffling

or evading difficulties, even at the price of all benefit to the anxious and earnest disciple. *Spartam nactus es,* was their motto, *hanc exorna;* and, like Cicero, in his Idea of an Orator, with relation to the practical duties; or Lord Shaftesbury, with relation to the accurate knowledge of the academic philosophy; they must be supposed deliberately to have made a *selection* from the arts or doctrines before them, for the sake of a beautiful composition which should preserve all its parts in harmony, and only secondarily (if at all) to have regarded the interests of the student. By all of them the invitation held out was not so much *Indocti discant,* as *Ament meminisse periti.*

In our own country there have been numerous "letters," &c., on this interesting subject; but not one that has laid any hold on the public mind, except the two works of Dr. Watts, especially that upon the "Improvement of the Mind." Being the most imbecile of books, it must have owed its success—1. To the sectarian zeal of his party in religion,—his fellows and his followers; 2. To the fact of its having gained for its author, from two Scotch universities, the highest degree they could bestow; 3. To the distinguished honour of having been adopted as a lecture-book (q. as an examination-book?) by both English universities; 4. To the extravagant praise of Dr. Johnson, amongst whose infirmities it was to praise warmly

when he was flattered by the sense of his own great superiority in powers and knowledge. Dr. Johnson supposes it to have been modelled on Locke's Conduct of the Understanding; but surely this is as ludicrous as to charge upon Silence any elaborate imitation of Mr. Justice Shallow. That Silence may have borrowed from another man half of a joke, or echoed the roar of his laughter, is possible; but of any more grave or laborious attempts to rob he stands ludicrously acquitted by the exemplary imbecility of his nature. No; Dr. Watts did *not* steal from Mr. Locke; in matters of dulness a man is easily original; and I suppose that even Feeble or Shallow might have credit for the effort necessary to the following counsels, taken at random from Dr. Watts, at the page where the book has happened to fall open.

1. Get a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the subject which you treat of; survey it on all sides, and make yourself perfect master of it; then (then! what then?—Think of Feeble making an inference. Well, "then") you will have all the sentiments that relate to it in your view; 2. Be well skilled in the language which you speak; 3. Acquire a variety of words, a *copia verborum*. Let your memory be rich in synonymous terms, p. 228, edit. 1817.

Well done, most magnanimous Feeble! Such counsels I suppose that any man might have pro-

duced, and you will not wish to see criticised. Let me rather inquire, what common defect it is which has made the works of much more ingenious men, and in particular that of Locke, utterly useless for the end proposed. The error in these books is the same which occurs in books of ethics, and which has made them more or less useless for any practical purpose. As it is important to put an end to all delusion in matters of such grave and general concern as the improvement of our understandings, or the moral valuation of actions, and as I repeat that the delusion here alluded to has affected both equally (so far as they can be affected by the books written professedly to assist them), it may be worth while to spend a few lines in exposing it. I believe that you are so far acquainted with the structure of a syllogism as to know how to distinguish between the major and minor proposition; there is, indeed, a technical rule which makes it impossible to err; but you will have no need of *that*, if you once apprehend the *rationale* of a syllogism in the light under which I will here place it. In every syllogism one of the two premises (the major) lays down a rule, under which rule the other (the minor) brings the subject of your argument as a particular case. The minor is, therefore, distinguished from the major by an act of the *judgment*, *namely*, a subsumption of a special case under a rule. Now

consider how this applies to morals: here the conscience supplies the general rule, or major proposition, and about this there is no question, but, to bring the special case of conduct, which is the subject of your inquiry, under this general rule; here first commences the difficulty, and just upon this point are ethical treatises for the most part silent. Accordingly, no man thinks of consulting them for his direction under any moral perplexities; if he reads them at all, it is for the gratification of his understanding in surveying the order and relation amongst the several members of a system; never for the information of his moral judgment.

For any practical use in that way, a *casuistry*, that is, a subsumption of the *cases* most frequently recurring in ordinary life, should be combined with the system of moral principles*—the latter supplying the major (or normal) proposition; the

* Accordingly, our fashionable moral practitioner for this generation, Dr. Paley, who prescribes for the consciences of both universities, and, indeed, of most respectable householders, has introduced a good deal of casuistry into his work, though not under that name. In England there is an aversion to the mere name, founded partly on this, that casuistry has been most cultivated by Roman Catholic divines, and too much with a view to an indulgent and dispensing morality; and partly on the excessive subdivision and hair-splitting of cases; which tends to the infinite injury of morals, by perplexing and tampering with the conscience, and by presuming morality to be above the powers of any but the subtlest minds. All this, however, is but the abuse of casuistry; and without

former supplying the minor proposition, which brings the special case under the rule. With the help of this explanation, you will easily understand on what principle I venture to denounce, as unprofitable, the whole class of books written on the model of Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*. According to Locke, the student is not to hurry, but again not to loiter; not to be too precipitate, nor yet too hesitating; not to be too confiding, but far less too suspicious; not too obstinate in his own opinions, yet again (for the love of God!) not too resigned to those of others; not too general in his divisions, but (as he regards his own soul) not too minute, &c. &c.

But surely no man, bent on the improvement of the faculties, was ever guilty of these errors under these names, that is, knowingly and deliberately. If he is so at all, it is either that he has not reflected on his own method, or that, having done so, he has allowed himself in the act or habit offending these rules on a false view of its tendency and character; because, in fact, having

casuistry of some sort or other, no practical decision could be made in the accidents of daily life. Of this, on a fitter occasion, I could give a cumulative proof. Meantime let it suffice to observe that law, which is the most practical of all things, is a perpetual casuistry; in which an immemorial usage, a former decision of the court, or positive statute, furnishes the major proposition; and the judgment of the jury, enlightened by the knowledge of the bench, furnishes the minor or casuistical proposition.

adopted as his rule (or major) that very golden mean which Mr. Locke recommends, and which, without Mr. Locke's suggestion, he would have adopted for himself, it has yet been possible for him, by an erroneous judgment, to take up an act or habit under the rule, which with better advice he would have excluded; which advice is exactly what Mr. Locke has—*not* given. Over and above all this, the method of the book is aphoristic; and, as might be expected from that method, without a plan; and which is partly the cause and partly the consequence of having a plan without foundation.

This word *foundation* leads me to one remark suggested by your letter; and with that I shall conclude my own. When I spoke above of the student's taking his foundations broad and deep, I had my eye chiefly on the corner-stones of strong-built knowledge, namely, on logic; on a proper choice of languages; on a particular part of what is called metaphysics; and on mathematics. Now you allege (I suppose upon occasion of my references to mathematics in my last letter) that you have no "genius" for mathematics; and you speak with the usual awe (*pavor attonitorum*) of the supposed "profundity" of intellect necessary to a great progress in this direction. Be assured that you are in utter error, though it be an error all but universal. In mathematics, upon two

irresistible arguments which I shall set in a clear light, when I come to explain the procedure of the mind with regard to that sort of evidence, and that sort of investigation, there can be no subtlety; all minds are levelled except as to the rapidity of the course, and, from the entire absence of all those acts of mind which do really imply profundity of intellect, it is a question whether an idiot might not be made an excellent mathematician. Listen not to the romantic notions of the world on this subject; above all, listen not to mathematicians. Mathematicians, as *mathematicians*, have no business with the question. It is one thing to understand mathematics; another, and far different, to understand the philosophy of mathematics. With respect to this, it is memorable, that in no one of the great philosophical questions which the ascent of mathematics has from time to time brought up above the horizon of our speculative view, has any mathematician who was merely such (however eminent) had depth of intellect adequate to its solution, without insisting on the absurdities published by mathematicians, on the philosophy of the *infinite*, since that notion was introduced into mathematics, or on the fruitless attempts of all but a metaphysician to settle the strife between the conflicting modes of valuing *living forces*;—I need only ask what English or French mathematician has been able to exhibit the notion of

*negative quantities*, in a theory endurable even to a popular philosophy, or which has commanded any assent? Or again, what Algebra is there existing which does not contain a false and ludicrous account of the procedure in that science, as contrasted with the procedure in geometry? But, not to trouble you with more of these cases so opprobrious to mathematicians, lay this to heart, that mathematics are very easy and very important; they are, in fact, the organ of one large division of human knowledge. And, as it is of consequence that you should lose no time by waiting for my letter on that subject, let me forestall so much of it, as to advise that you would immediately commence with Euclid; reading those eight books of the Elements which are usually read, and the Data. If you should go no further, so much geometry will be useful and delightful; and so much, by reading for two hours a day, you will easily accomplish in about thirteen weeks, that is, one quarter of a year.

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## LETTER III.

My dear Sir,—In my three following letters, I am to consider, 1st, Languages; 2nd, Logic; 3rd, Arts

of Memory; not as parts of knowledge sought or valued on their own account, but simply as the most general amongst the means and instruments of the student, estimated therefore with a reference to the number and importance of the *ends* which they further, and fairly to be presumed in all schemes of self-improvement liberally planned. In this letter I will speak of languages; my thoughts, and a twenty years' experience as a student, having furnished me with some hints that may be useful in determining your choice, where choice is at first sight so difficult, and the evils of an erroneous choice so great. On this Babel of an earth which you and I inhabit, there are said to be about three thousand languages and jargons. Of nearly five hundred you will find a specimen in the Mithridates of Adelung, and in some other German works of more moderate bulk.* The final purposes of this vast engine for separating nations it is not difficult in part to perceive; and it is presumable that those purposes have been nearly fulfilled; since there can be little doubt

* Especially one, whose title I forget, by Vater, the editor and completer of the *Mithridates*, after Adelung's death. By the way, for the sake of the merely English reader, it may be well to mention that the *Mithridates* is so called with an allusion to the great king of that name contemporary with Sylla, Lucullus, &c., of whom the tradition was that, in an immense and polyglot army, composed from a great variety of nations, he could talk to every soldier in his own language.

that within the next two centuries all the barbarous languages of the earth (that is, those without a literature) will be one after one strangled and exterminated by four European languages, namely, the English, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Russian. Central Africa, and *that* only, can resist the momentum of civilisation for a longer period. Now, languages are sometimes studied, not as a key to so many bodies of literature, but as an object *per se*, for example, by Sir William Jones, Dr. Leyden, &c.; and where the researches are conducted with the enthusiasm and the sagacity of the late extraordinary Professor of Oriental Languages in Edinburgh, Dr. Alexander Murray, it is impossible to withhold one's admiration; *he* had a theory, and distinct purposes, which shed light upon his paths that are else "as dark as Erebus." Such labours conducted in such a spirit must be important, if the eldest records of the human race be important; for the affinities of language furnish the main clue for ascending, through the labyrinths of nations, to their earliest origins and connexions. To a professed linguist, therefore, the natural advice would be—examine the structure of as many languages as possible; gather as many thousand specimens as possible into your *hortus siccus*, beginning with the eldest forms of the Teutonic, namely, the Visigothic and the Icelandic, for which the aids

rendered by modern learning are immense. To a professed philologist, I say, the natural advice would be this. But to you, who have no such purposes, and whom I suppose to wish for languages simply as avenues to literature not otherwise accessible, I will frankly say, start from this principle—that the act of learning a language is in itself an evil; and so frame your selection of languages, that the largest possible body of literature *available for your purposes* shall be laid open to you at the least possible price of time and mental energy squandered in this direction. I say this with some earnestness. For I will not conceal from you, that one of the habits most unfavourable to the growth and sincere culture of the intellect in our day, is the facility with which men surrender themselves to the barren and ungenial labour of language-learning. Unless balanced by studies that give more exercise, more excitement, and more aliment to the faculties, I am convinced, by all I have observed, that this practice is the dry rot of the human mind. How should it be otherwise? The act of learning a science is good, not only for the knowledge which results, but for the exercise which attends it; the energies which the learner is obliged to put forth are true intellectual energies, and his very errors are full of instruction. He fails to construct some leading idea, or he even misconstructs it; he

places himself in a false position with respect to certain propositions; views them from a false centre; makes a false or an imperfect antithesis; apprehends a definition with insufficient rigour; or fails in his use of it to keep it self-consistent. These and a thousand other errors are met by a thousand appropriate resources—all of a true intellectual character; comparing, combining, distinguishing, generalizing, subdividing, acts of abstraction and evolution, of synthesis and analysis, until the most torpid minds are ventilated, and healthily excited by this introversion of the faculties upon themselves.

But, in the study of languages (with an exception, however, to a certain extent, in favour of Latin and Greek, which I shall notice hereafter), nothing of all this can take place, and for one simple reason—that all is arbitrary. Wherever there is a law and system, wherever there is relation and correspondence of parts, the intellect will make its way—will interfuse amongst the dry bones the blood and pulses of life, and create "a soul under the ribs of death." But whatsoever is arbitrary and conventional—which yields no reason why it should be this way rather than that, obeying no theory or law—must, by its lifeless forms, kill and mortify the action of the intellect. If this be true, it becomes every student to keep watch upon himself, that he does

not, upon any light temptation, allow himself an over-balance of study in this direction; for the temptations to such an excess, which in our days are more powerful than formerly, are at all times too powerful. Of all the weapons in the armoury of the scholar, none is so showy or so captivating to commonplace minds as skill in languages. *Vanity* is, therefore, one cause of undue application to languages. A second is the national *fashion*. What nation but ourselves ever made the language of its eternal enemy an essential part of even a decent education?* What should we think of Roman policy, if, during the Second Punic War, the Carthaginian language had been taught as a matter of course to the children of every Roman citizen? But a third cause, which I believe has more efficacy than either of the former, is mere *levity*—the simple fact of being unballasted by any sufficient weight of plan or settled purpose to present a counterpoise to the slightest momentum this way or that, arising from any impulse of accident or personal caprice. When there is no resistance, a breath of air will be sufficient to determine the motion. I remember once that,

* See the advertisements of the humblest schools; in which, however low the price of tuition, &c., is fixed, French never fails to enter as a principal branch of the course of study. To which fact I may add, that even twelve or fifteen years ago I have seen French circulating libraries in London chiefly supported by people in an humble rank.

happening to spend an autumn in Ilfracombe, on the west coast of Devonshire, I found all the young ladies whom I knew busily employed on the study of marine botany. On the opposite shore of the channel, in all the South Welsh ports of Tenby, &c., they were no less busy upon conchology. In neither case from any previous love of the science, but simply availing themselves of their local advantages. Now, here a man must have been truly ill-natured to laugh; for the studies were in both instances beautiful. A love for it was created, if it had not pre-existed; and, to women, and young women, the very absence of all austere unity of purpose and self-determination was becoming and graceful. Yet, when this same levity and liability to casual impulses came forward in the acts and purposes of a man, I must own that I have often been unable to check myself in something like a contemptuous feeling; nor should I wish to check myself, but for remembering how many men of energetic minds constantly give way to slight and inadequate motives, simply for want of being summoned to any anxious reviews of their own conduct. How many cases have I known where a particular study—as, suppose, of the Hartleyan philosophy—was pursued throughout a whole college simply because a man of talents had talked of it in the junior common-room? How many where a book became popular because

it had been mentioned in the House of Commons? How many where a man resolved to learn Welsh because he was spending a month or two at Barmouth? or Italian because he had found a Milan series of the poets in his aunt's library? or the violin because he had bought a fine one at an auction?

In 1808-9 you must well remember what a strong impulse the opening of the Peninsular War communicated to our current literature. The presses of London and the provinces teemed with editions of Spanish books, dictionaries, and grammars; and the motions of the British armies were accompanied by a corresponding activity among British compositors. From the just interest which is now renewed in Spanish affairs, I suppose something of the same scene will recur. Now, for my own part, though undoubtedly I would, for the sake of Calderon alone, (judging of him from a German translation), most willingly study the Spanish literature (if I had leisure), yet I should be ashamed to do so upon the irrelevant and *occasional* summons of an interesting situation in Spanish affairs. I should feel that by such an act I confessed a want of pre-occupation in my mind, a want of self-origination in my plans, an inertness of will, which, above all things, I do and ought to detest. If it were right for me (right, I mean, in relation to my previous scheme of study)

to have dedicated a portion of my life to the Spanish literature, it must have been right before the Spanish politics took an interesting aspect. If it were not right, it could not become so upon a suggestion so purely verbal as the recurrence of the word Spanish in the London journals.

This, I am sure, you will interpret candily. I am not supposing you less furnished with powers of self-determination than myself. I have no personal allusion or exception; but I suppose every man liable to be acted on unduly, or by inadequate impulses, so long as he is not possessed by some plan that may steady that levity of nature which is implied in the mere state of indifference to all settled plans. This levity, in our days, meets with an accidental ally in the extraordinary facilities for studying languages in the shape of elementary books; which facilities of themselves form a fourth cause of the disproportionate study given to languages. But a fifth cause occurs to me, of a less selfish and indolent character than any of the preceding; and, as it seems to me hardly possible that it should not influence you more or less to make your choice of languages too large and comprehensive, I shall tell you, from my own case, what may be sufficient to set you on your guard against too much indulgence to a feeling in itself just and natural. In my youthful days, I never entered a great library, suppose of

one hundred thousand volumes, but my predominant feeling was one of pain and disturbance of mind,—not much unlike that which drew tears from Xerxes, on viewing his immense army, and reflecting that in one hundred years not one soul would remain alive. To me, with respect to the books, the same effect would be brought about by my own death. Here, said I, are one hundred thousand books, the worst of them capable of giving me some pleasure and instruction; and before I can have had time to extract the honey from one-twentieth of this hive, in all likelihood I shall be summoned away. This thought, I am sure, must have often occurred to yourself; and you may judge how much it was aggravated when I found that, subtracting all merely professional books—books of reference, as dictionaries, &c. &c. &c.—from the universal library of Europe, there would still remain a total of not less than twelve hundred thousand books over and above what the presses of Europe are still disemboguing into the ocean of literature, many of them immense folios or quartos. Now, I had been told by an eminent English author, that, with respect to one single work, namely the History of Thuanus, a calculation had been made by a Portuguese monk, which showed that barely to read over the words (and allowing no time for reflection) would require three years' labour, at the

rate of (I think) three hours a day. Further, I had myself ascertained that to read a duodecimo volume, in prose, of four hundred pages—all skipping being barred, and the rapid reading which belongs to the vulgar interest of a novel—was a very sufficient work for one day. Consequently, three hundred and sixty-five per annum—that is (with a very small allowance for the claims of life on one's own account and that of one's friends), one thousand for every triennium; that is, ten thousand for thirty years—will be as much as a man who lives for that only can hope to accomplish. From the age of twenty to eighty, therefore—if a man were so unhappy as to live to eighty—the utmost he could hope to travel through would be twenty thousand volumes,—a number not, perhaps, above *five per cent.* of what the mere *current* literature of Europe would accumulate in that period of years. Now, from this amount of twenty thousand make a deduction on account of books of larger size, books to be studied and books to be read slowly and many times over (as all works in which the composition is a principal part of their pretensions),—allow a fair discount for such deductions, and the twenty thousand will perhaps shrink to eight or five thousand. All this arithmetical statement you must not conceive to relate to any fanciful case of misery. No; I protest to you that I speak of as real a case of suffering as ever

can have existed. And it soon increased; for the same panic seized upon me with respect to the works of art. I found that I had no chance of hearing the twenty-five thousandth part of the music that had been produced. And so of other arts. Nor was this all; for, happening to say to myself, one night as I entered a long street, "I shall never see the one thousandth part of the people who are living in this single street," it occurred to me that every man and woman was a most interesting book, if one knew how to read them. Here opened upon me a new world of misery; for, if books and works of art existed by millions, men existed by hundreds of millions. Nay, even if it had been possible for me to know all of my own generation, yet, like Dr. Faustus, who desired to see "Helen of Greece," I should still have been dissatisfied; for what was one generation to all that were past? Nay, my madness took yet a higher flight; for I considered that I stood on a little isthmus of time, which connected the two great worlds, the past and the future. I stood in equal relation to both; I asked for admittance to one as much as to the other. Even if a necromancer could have brought up the great men of the seventeenth century, I should have said, "What good does all this do me? Where are those of the twentieth century?"—and so onward! In short, I never turned my thoughts this

way but I fell into a downright midsummer madness. I could not enjoy what I had,—craving for that which I had not, and could not have; was thirsty, like Tantalus, in the midst of waters; even when using my present wealth, thought only of its perishableness; and "wept to have what I so feared to lose."

But all this, you will say, was, by my own admission, "madness." Madness, I grant; but such a madness! not as lunatics suffer; no hallucination of the brain; but a madness like that of misers,—the usurpation and despotism of one feeling, natural in itself, but travelling into an excess, which at last upset all which should have balanced it. And I must assert, that with allowance for difference of degrees, no madness is more common. Many of those who give themselves up to the study of languages, do so under the same disease which I have described; and, if they do not carry it on to the same extremity of wretchedness, it is because they are not so logical, and so consistent in their madness, as I was. Under our present enormous accumulation of books, I do affirm that a miserable distraction of choice (which is the germ of such a madness) must be very generally incident to the times; that the symptoms of it are, in fact, very prevalent; and that one of the chief symptoms is an enormous "gluttonism" for books, and for adding

language to language ; and in this way it is, that literature becomes much more a source of torment than of pleasure. Nay, I will go further, and will say that, of many who escape this disease, some owe their privilege simply to the narrowness of their minds, and contracted range of their sympathies with literature, which, enlarged, they would soon lose it. Others, again, owe it to their situation ; as, for instance, in a country town, where books being few, a man can use up all his materials; his appetite is unpalled, and he is grateful for the loan of a MS., &c. But bring him up to London ; show him the waggon-loads of unused stores which he is at liberty to work up; tell him that these even are but a trifle, perhaps, to what he may find in the libraries of Paris, Dresden, Milan, &c.; of religious houses, of English noblemen, &c.,—and this same man who came up to London blithe and happy will leave it pale and sad. You have ruined his peace of mind. A subject which he fancied himself capable of exhausting, he finds to be a labour for centuries. He has no longer the healthy pleasure of feeling himself master of his materials ; he is degraded into their slave. Perhaps I dwell too much on this subject; but allow me, before I leave it, to illustrate what I have said by the case of two eminent literati, who are at this moment exhibiting themselves as a couple of figurantes (if I may so say) on the stage

of Europe, and who have sacrificed their own happiness and dignity of mind to the very madness I have been describing; or, if not, to the far more selfish passion for notoriety and ostentatious display. The men I mean are F. Bouterwek and Frederick Schlegel, better known to the English public as the friend of Madame de Staël.

The history of the first is somewhat ludicrous. Coming upon the stage at a time when Kant possessed the national mind of Germany, he thought it would be a good speculation not to fall into the train of the philosopher, but to open a sort of chapel of dissent. He saw no reason why men should not swear by Bouterwek, as well as by Kant; and, connecting this fact with the subsequent confession of Bouterwek, that he was in reality playing off a conscious hoax, it is laughable to mention, that for a time he absolutely found some followers—who worshipped him, but suspiciously and provisionally. Unfortunately, however, as he had no leisure or ability to understand Kant, he was obliged to adopt Dr. Priestly's plan of revoking and cancelling in every successive work all his former works, as false, pestilent, and heretical. This upset him. The philosopher was unfrocked; and in that line of business he found himself bankrupt. At this crisis things looked ill. However, being young, he pleaded his tender years. George Barnwell and others had been led

astray as well as himself, by keeping bad company: he had now quitted all connexion with metaphysics; and begged to inform the public that he had opened an entirely new concern for criticism in all its branches. He kept his word; he left off hoaxing, and applied himself to a respectable line of business.

The fruits of his labours were a history, in twelve volumes, of modern literature from the end of the thirteenth century. Of this work I have examined all that I pretend to judge of, namely, the two sections relating to the German and the English literature; and, not to do him injustice, if it professed to be no more than a bibliographical record of books, it is executed with a very laudable care and fidelity. But imagine to yourself the vast compass of his plan. He professes to give the history of—1. Spanish; 2. Portuguese; 3. English; 4. German; 5. French; 6. Italian literature; no sketch, observe, or abstract of them, but a full and formal history. Conceive, if you can, the monstrous and insane pretensions involved in such a scheme. At starting he had five languages to learn, besides the dialects of his own; not only so, but five languages, each through all its varieties for the space of half a millennium: English, for instance, not merely of this day, but the English of Chaucer, of the Metrical Romances; nay, even of Robert

of Gloucester, in 1280. Next, the mere printed books (to say nothing of the MSS.) in any one of these languages, to be read and meditated, as they ought to be by a *historian* of the literature, would have found full employment for twelve able-bodied men through an entire life. And, after all, when the materials were ready, the work of composition would be still to begin. Such were Bouterwek's pretensions. As to Schlegel's, who, without any more genius or originality, has much more talent,—his were still more extravagant, and were pushed to an extremity that must, I should think, at times disquiet his admirers with a feeling that all is not sound. For, though he did not profess to go so much into detail as Bouterwek, still his abstracts are represented as built on as much reading, though not directly quoted; and to all that Bouterwek held forth in his promises Schlegel added, as a little *bonus* to his subscribers, 1. Oriental literature; 2. The Scandinavian literature; 3. The Provençal literature; and, for aught I know, a billion of things besides; to say nothing of an active share in the current literature, as reviewer, magazinist, and author of all work. Now, the very history of these pretensions exposes their hollowness: to record them is to refute them. Knowing, as we all know, how many years it demands, and by what a leisurely and genial communication with

their works it is that we can gain any deep intimacy with even a few great artists, such as Shakspere, Milton, or Euripides, how monstrous a fiction would that man force on our credulity, who tells us that he has read and weighed in the balances the total products of human intellect dispersed through thirty languages for a period of three thousand years; and how gross a delusion does *he* practise upon his own mind who can persuade himself that it is *reading* to cram himself with words, the bare sense of which can hardly have time to glance, like the lamps of a mail coach, upon his hurried and bewildered understanding! There is a picture at Oxford, which I saw when a boy, of an old man, with misery in his eye, in the act of copying a book; and the story attached (I forget whether with any historic foundation) is that he was under a vow to copy out some great portion of the Bible before he allowed himself (or was allowed) to eat. I dare say you know the picture; and perhaps I tell the story wrong. However, just such a man, and just so wo-begone, must this man of words appear when he is alone in his study; with a frozen heart and a famished intellect; and every now and then, perhaps exclaiming with Alcibiades, "O ye Athenians! what a world of hardship I endure to obtain your applause!" So slightly is his knowledge worked into the texture of his mind

that I am persuaded a brain fever would sweep it all away. With this sketch of Messrs. Bouterwek and Schlegel, it is superfluous to add that their criticisms are utterly *worthless*; being all words—words—words: however, with this difference, that Bouterwek's are simply = 0, being the mere rubbishy sweepings from the works of literatuli long since defunct: but Schlegel's, agreeably to his natural haughtiness and superior talents, are bad in a positive sense—being filled with such conceits, fancies, and fictions, as you would naturally expect from a clever man talking about what he had never, in any true sense of the word, read.* — O genius of English good sense,

* The most disingenuous instances in Schlegel of familiar acquaintance claimed with subjects of which he is necessarily ignorant, are the numerous passages in which he speaks of philosophers, especially of Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Kant. In such cases, his sentences are always most artificially and jesuitically constructed, to give him the air of being quite at his ease on the one hand, and yet, on the other, to avoid committing himself by too much descent into particulars. So dangerous, however, is it for the ablest man to attempt speaking of what he does not understand, that, as a sailor will detect a landsman, however expert in the use of nautical diction, before he has uttered two sentences, so, with all his art and finesse, and speaking besides to questions of his own choosing, yet cannot Schlegel escape detection in any one instance, when he has attempted to act the philosopher. Even where the thing said is not otherwise objectionable, it generally detects itself as the remark of a novice, by addressing itself to something extra-essential in the philosophy, and which a true judge would have passed over as impertinent to

keep any child of mine from ever sacrificing his peace and intellectual health to such a life of

the real business of the system. Of the ludicrous blunders which inevitably arise in both Bouterwek and Schlegel, from hasty reading, or no reading at all, I noted some curious instances in my pocket-book; but, not having it with me, I shall mention two from memory. Bouterwek and Schlegel both would be highly offended, I suppose, if I were to doubt whether they had ever read the Paradise Lost. "O calumny, vile calumny! We that have given such fine criticisms upon it, not to have read it!" Yes; but there is such a case *in rerum naturâ* as that of criticising a work which the critic had not even seen. Now, that Bouterwek had not read the Paradise Lost, I think probable from this: Bodmer, during part of the first half of the last century, as is known to the students of German literature, was at the head of a party who supported the English literature against the French party of the old dolt Gottsched. From some works of Bodmer's, Bouterwek quotes with praise a passage which, from being in plain German prose, he supposes to be Bodmer's, but which, unfortunately, happens to be a passage in the Paradise Lost, and so memorable a passage that no one having once read it could have failed to recognise it. So much for Bouterwek. As to Schlegel, the presumption against him rests upon this; he is lecturing Milton in a high professor's style for his choice of a subject: "Milton," says he, "did not consider that the fall of man was but an inchoate action, but a part of a system, of which the restoration of man is another and equally essential part. The action of the Paradise Lost is, therefore, essentially imperfect." (Quoting from memory, and from a memory some years old, I do not pretend to give the words, but this is the sense.) Now, *pace tanti viri*, Milton *did* consider this, and has provided for it by a magnificent expedient, which a man who had read the Paradise Lost would have been likely to remember, namely, by the Vision combined with the Narrative of the Archangel, in which his final restoration is made known to Adam; without which, indeed, to say nothing of Mr. Schlegel's objection, the poem could not

showy emptiness, of pretence, of noise, and of words; and even with a view to the opinion of others, if it were worth while sacrificing very much to *that*, teach him how far more enviable is the reputation of having produced even one work, though but in a lower department of art, and which has given pleasure to myriads—(such, suppose, as *The Vicar of Wakefield*)—than to have lived in the wonderment of a gazing crowd, like a rope-dancer, or a posture-master, with the fame of incredible attainments that tend to no man's pleasure, and which perish to the remembrance of all men as soon as their possessor is in his grave.

Thus, at some risk of fatiguing you, I have endeavoured to sharpen your attention to the extreme danger which threatens a self-instructor in the besetting temptations to an over-cultivation of languages; temptations which, whether appealing to his vanity and love of ostentation, or to his craving for a multifarious mastery over books, terminate in the same evil of substituting a barren study of words, which is, besides, the most lingering of all studies, for the healthy exercises of the intellect. All the great European poets, orators, and wits, are mentioned in a man's hearing so often, and so much discussion is constantly going

have closed with that *repose* necessary as the final impression of any great work of art.

on about their comparative merits, that a body of irritation and curiosity collects about these names, and unites with more legitimate feelings to persuade a man that it is necessary he should read them all—each in his own language. In a celebrated satire (*The Pursuits of Literature*), much read in my youth, and which I myself read about twenty-five years ago, I remember one counsel—there addressed to young men, but, in fact, of universal application. "I call upon them," said the author, "to *dare* to be ignorant of many things:" a wise counsel, and justly expressed; for it requires much courage to forsake popular paths of knowledge, merely upon a conviction that they are not favourable to the ultimate ends of knowledge. In you, however, *that* sort of courage may be presumed; but how will you "dare to be ignorant" of many things in opposition to the cravings of your own mind? Simply thus: destroy these false cravings by introducing a healthier state of the organ. A good scheme of study will soon show itself to be such by this one test—that it will exclude as powerfully as it will appropriate; it will be a system of repulsion no less than of attraction; once thoroughly possessed and occupied by the deep and genial pleasure of one truly intellectual pursuit, you will be easy and indifferent to all others that had previously teased you with transient excitement; just as you

will sometimes see a man superficially irritated, as it were, with wandering fits of liking for three or four women at once, which he is absurd enough to call "being in love;" but, once profoundly in love (supposing him capable of being so), he never makes such a mistake again, all his feelings after *that* being absorbed into a sublime unity. Now, without anticipating this scheme of study out of its place, yet in general you know whether your intentions lean most to science or to literature. For upon this decision revolve the whole motives which can determine your choice of languages; as, for instance, if you are in quest of science or philosophy, no language in Europe at this day (unless the Turkish) is so slenderly furnished as the Spanish; on the other hand, for literature, I am disposed to think that after the English none is so wealthy (I mean in quality, not in quantity).

Here, however, to prevent all mistakes, let me establish one necessary distinction. The word *literature* is a perpetual source of confusion, because it is used in two senses, and those senses liable to be confounded with each other. In a philosophical use of the word, literature is the direct and adequate antithesis of books of knowledge. But, in a popular use, it is a mere term of convenience for expressing inclusively the total books in a language. In this latter sense, a dic-

tionary, a grammar, a spelling-book, an almanac, a pharmacopœia, a Parliamentary report, a system of farriery, a treatise on billiards, the Court Calendar, &c., belong to the literature. But, in the philosophical sense, not only would it be ludicrous to reckon these as parts of the literature, but even books of much higher pretensions must be excluded—as, for instance, books of voyages and travels, and generally all books in which the matter to be communicated is paramount to the manner or form of its communication ("ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri"). It is difficult to construct the idea of "literature" with severe accuracy; for it is a fine art—the supreme fine art, and liable to the difficulties which attend such a subtle notion; in fact, a severe construction of the idea must be the *result* of a philosophical investigation into this subject, and cannot precede it. But, for the sake of obtaining some expression for literature that may answer our present purpose, let us throw the question into another form. I have said that the antithesis of literature is books of knowledge. Now, what is that antithesis to *knowledge*, which is here implicitly latent in the word literature? The vulgar antithesis is *pleasure* ("aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ"). Books, we are told, propose to *instruct* or to *amuse*. Indeed! However, not to spend any words upon it, I suppose you will admit that this

wretched antithesis will be of no service to us. And, by the way, let me remark to you, in this, as in other cases, how men by their own errors of understanding, by feeble thinking, and inadequate distinctions, forge chains of meanness and servility for themselves. For, this miserable alternative being once admitted, observe what follows. In which class of books does the Paradise Lost stand? Among those which instruct, or those which *amuse?* Now, if a man answers among those which instruct, he lies; for there is no instruction in it, nor could be in any great poem, according to the meaning which the word must bear in this distinction, unless it is meant that it should involve its own antithesis. But if he says, "No; amongst those which amuse," then what a beast must he be to degrade, and in this way, what has done the most of any human work to raise and dignify human nature. But the truth is, you see, that the idiot does not wish to degrade it; on the contrary, he would willingly tell a lie in its favour, if that would be admitted; but such is the miserable state of slavery to which he has reduced himself by his own puny distinction; for, as soon as he hops out of one of his little cells, he is under a necessity of hopping into the other. The true antithesis* to knowledge, in this

* For which distinction, as for most of the sound criticism on poetry, or any subject connected with it, that I have ever

case, is not *pleasure*, but power. All that is literature seeks to communicate power; all that is not literature, to communicate knowledge. Now, if it be asked what is meant by communicating power, I, in my turn, would ask by what name a man would designate the case in which I should be made to feel vividly, and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting, and which had previously lain unwakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness—as myriads of modes of feeling are at this moment in every human mind for want of a poet to organize them? I say, when these inert and sleeping forms *are*

met with, I must acknowledge my obligations to many years, conversation with Mr. Wordsworth. Upon this occasion, it may be useful to notice, that there is a rhetorical use of the word "power," very different from the analytic one here introduced, which, also, is due originally to Mr. Wordsworth, and will be found in no book before 1798; this is now become a regular slang term in London conversation. In reference to which, it is worth notice that a critic, speaking of the late Mr. Shelley, a year or two ago, in the most popular literary journal of the day, said, "It is alleged that there is power in Mr. Shelley's poetry; now, there can be no power shown in poetry, except by writing good poems" (or words to that effect.) Waiving, however, the question of Mr. Shelley's merits, so far is this remark from being true, that the word was originally introduced expressly to provide for the case where, though the poem was *not good* from defect in the *composition*, or from other causes, the stamina and *matériel* of good poetry, as fine thinking and passionate conceptions, could not be denied to exist.

organized, when these possibilities *are* actualized, is this conscious and living possession of mine *power*, or what is it?

When, in King Lear, the height, and depth, and breadth, of human passion is revealed to us, and, for the purposes of a sublime antagonism, is revealed in the weakness of an old man's nature, and in one night two worlds of storm are brought face to face—the human world, and the world of physical nature — mirrors of each other, semi-choral antiphonies, strophe and antistrophe heaving with rival convulsions, and with the double darkness of night and madness,—when I am thus suddenly startled into a feeling of the infinity of the world within me, is this power, or what may I call it? Space, again, what is it in most men's minds? The lifeless form of the world without us, a postulate of the geometrician, with no more vitality or real existence to their feelings than the square root of two. But, if Milton has been able to *inform* this empty theatre, peopling it with Titanic shadows, forms that sat at the eldest counsels of the infant world, chaos and original night,—

> "Ghostly shapes,
> To meet at noontide, Fear and trembling Hope,
> Death the Skeleton,
> And Time the Shadow,"—

so that, from being a thing to inscribe with dia-

grams, it has become under his hands a vital agent on the human mind,—I presume that I may justly express the tendency of the Paradise Lost, by saying that it communicates power; a pretension far above all communication of knowledge. Henceforth, therefore, I shall use the antithesis power and knowledge as the most philosophical expression for literature (that is, Literæ Humaniores) and anti-literature (that is, Literæ didacticæ —Παιδεια).

Now, then, prepared with this distinction, let us inquire whether — weighing the difficulties against the benefits—there is an overbalance of motive for you with your purposes to study what are inaccurately termed the "classical" languages.* And first with respect to Greek, we

* A late writer has announced it as a matter of discovery that the term "classics" is applicable also to the modern languages. But, surely, this was never doubted by any man who considered the meaning and origin of the term. It is drawn, as the reader must be reminded, from the political economy of Rome. Such a man was rated as to his income, in the third class; such another in the fourth, and so on; but he who was in the highest was said emphatically to be of *the* class, "classicus," a class-man, without adding the number, as in that case superfluous. Hence, by an obvious analogy, the best authors were rated as *classici*, or men of the highest class; just as in English we say, "men of rank," absolutely for men who are in the highest ranks of the State. The particular error by which this mere formal term of relation was *materiated* (if I may so say) in one of its accidents (namely the application to Greek and Roman writers), is one of the commonest and most natural.

have often had the question debated, and in our own days, solemn challenges thrown out, and solemn adjudications given on the question, whether any benefit corresponding to the time and the labour can be derived from the study of the ancient classics. Hitherto, however, the question could not be rightly shaped; for, as no man chose to plead "amusement" as a sufficient motive for so great an undertaking, it was always debated with a single reference to the *knowledge* involved in those literatures. But this is a ground wholly untenable. For, let the knowledge be what it might, all knowledge is translateable; and translateable without one atom of loss. If this were all, therefore, common sense would prescribe that faithful translations should be executed of all the classics, and all men in future depend upon these vicarious labours. With respect to the Greek, this would soon be accomplished; for what is the knowledge which lurks in that language? All knowledge may be commodiously distributed into science and erudition; of the latter (antiquities, geography, philology, theology, &c.), there is a very considerable body; of the former, but little, namely, the mathematical and musical works, and the medical works — what else? Nothing that can deserve the name of science, except the single *organon* of Aristotle. With Greek medicine I suppose that you have no concern.

As to mathematics, a man must be an idiot if he were to study Greek for the sake of Archimedes, Apollonius, or Diophantus. In Latin or in French you may find them all regularly translated, and parts of them embodied in the works of English mathematicians. Besides, if it were otherwise, where the notions and all the relations are so few, elementary, and determinate, and the vocabulary therefore so scanty, as in mathematics, it could not be necessary to learn Greek, even if you were disposed to read the mathematicians in that language. I see no marvel in Halley's having translated an Arabic manuscript on mathematics, with no previous knowledge of Arabic; on the contrary, it is a case (and not a very difficult case) of the art of deciphering, so much practised by Wallis and other great mathematicians contemporary with Halley. But all this is an idle disputation; for the knowledge of whatsoever sort which lies in Grecian mines, wretchedly as we are furnished with vernacular translations, the Latin version will always supply. This, therefore, is not the ground to be taken by the advocate of Greek letters. It is not for knowledge that Greek is worth learning, but for power. Here arises the question—Of what value is this power? that is, how is the Grecian literature to be rated in relation to other literatures? Now, is it not only because "De Carthagine satius est silere quam

parciùs dicere," but also because in my judgment there is no more offensive form of levity than the readiness to speak on great problems, incidentally and occasionally,—that I shall wholly decline this question. We have hitherto seen no rational criticism on Greek literature; nor, indeed, to say the truth, much criticism which teaches anything, or solves anything upon any literature. I shall simply suggest one consideration to you. The question is limited wholly, as you see, to the value of the literature in the proper sense of that word. Now, it is my private theory, to which you will allow what degree of weight you please, that the antique or pagan literature is a polar antagonist to the modern or Christian literature; that each is an evolution from a distinct principle, having nothing in common but what is necessarily common to all modes of thought, namely good sense and logic; and that they are to be criticised from different stations and points of view. This same thought has occurred to others; but no great advance is made simply by propounding the general thesis; and as yet nobody has done more.*

* Nor do I much expect, *will* do more: which opinion I build on the particular formula chosen for expressing the opposition of the antique and the Christian literature, namely, the classical and the romantic. This seeming to me to imply a total misconception of the true principle on which the distinction rests, I naturally look for no further developments of the thesis from that quarter.

It is only by the development of this thesis that any real service can be performed. This I have myself attempted, in a series of "reveries" on that subject; and, if you continue to hesitate on the question of learning Greek, now that you know exactly how that question is shaped, and to what it points, my manuscript contains all the assistance that it is in *my* power to offer you in such a dilemma. The difference of the antique from the Christian literature, you must bear in mind, is not like that between English and Spanish literature—species and species—but as between genius and genius. The advantages, therefore, are—1, the *power* which it offers generally as a literature; 2, the new phases under which it presents the human mind; the antique being the other hemisphere, as it were, which, with our own or Christian hemisphere, composes the entire sphere of human intellectual energy.

So much for the Greek. Now, as to the Latin, the case is wholly reversed. Here the literature is of far less value; and, on the whole, with your views, it might be doubted whether it would recompense your pains. But the anti-literature (as for want of a strict antithesis I must call it) is inestimable; Latin having been the universal language of Christendom for so long a period. The Latin works since the restoration of letters are alone of immense value for knowledge of every

kind; much science, inexhaustible erudition; and to this day in Germany, and elsewhere on the Continent, the best part of the latter is communicated in Latin. Now, though all knowledge *is* (which power is not) adequately communicable by translation, yet as there is no hope that the immense bibliotheca of Latin accumulated in the last three centuries ever will be translated, you cannot possibly dispense with this language; and, that being so, it is fortunate that you have already a superficial acquaintance with it. The best means of cultivating it further, and the grounds of selection amongst the *modern* languages of Christendom, I will discuss fully in my next letter.

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## LETTER IV.

My dear Sir,—It is my misfortune to have been under the necessity too often of writing rapidly, and without opportunities for after-revision. In cases where much *composition** is demanded, this is a serious misfortune, and sometimes irreparable,

* "*Composition*."—This word I use in a sense, not indeed peculiar to myself, but yet not very common, nor anywhere, that I know of, sufficiently developed. It is of the highest importance in criticism; and, therefore, I shall add a note upon the true construction of the idea, either at the end of this letter or the next, according to the space left.

except at the price of recasting the whole work. But, to a subject like the present, little of what is properly called composition is applicable; and somewhat the less from the indeterminate form of *letters* into which I have purposely thrown my communications. Errors in composition apart, there can be no others of importance, except such as relate to the matter; and those are not at all the more incident to a man because he is in a hurry. Not to be too much at leisure is, indeed, often an advantage. On no occasion of their lives do men generally speak better than on the scaffold, and with the executioner at their side; partly, indeed, because they are then most in earnest, and unsolicitous about effect; but partly, also, because the pressure of the time sharpens and condenses the faculty of abstracting the capital points at issue. On this account, I do not plead haste as an absolute and unmitigated disadvantage. Haste palliates what haste occasions. Now, there is no haste which can occasion oversights, as to the matter, to him who has meditated sufficiently upon his subject; all that haste can do in such a case is to affect the language with respect to accuracy and precision; and thus far I plead it. I shall never plead it as shrinking from the severest responsibility for the thoughts and substance of anything I say; but often in palliation of expressions careless or ill chosen.

And at no time can I stand more in need of such indulgence than at present, when I write both hastily and under circumstances of— But no matter what. Believe, in general, that I write under circumstances as unfavourable for careful selection of words as can well be imagined.

In my last letter I declined to speak of the antique literature, as a subject too unwieldy and unmanageable for my limits. I now recur to it, for the sake of guarding and restraining that particular sentence in which I have spoken of the Roman literature as inferior to the Greek. In common with all the world, I must, of necessity, think it so in the drama, and generally in poetry κατ' ἐξοχην. Indeed, for some forms of poetry, even of the lower order, it was the misfortune of the Roman literature that they were not cultivated until the era of fastidious taste, which in every nation takes place at a certain stage of society. They were harshly transplanted as exotics, and never passed through the just degrees of a natural growth on Roman soil. Notwithstanding this, the most exquisite specimens of the lighter lyric which the world has yet seen must be sought for in Horace; and very few writers of any country have approached to Virgil in the art of *composition*, however low we may be disposed at this day to rank him as a poet, when tried in the unequal contest with the sublimities of the Chris-

tian literature. The truth is (and this is worth being attended to), that the peculiar sublimity of the Roman mind does not express itself, nor is it at all to be sought, in their poetry. Poetry, according to the Roman ideal of it, was not an adequate organ for the grander movements of the national mind. Roman sublimity must be looked for in Roman acts and in Roman sayings.

For their acts, see their history for a thousand years, the early and fabulous part not excepted, —which, for the very reason that it *is* fabulous,* must be taken as so much the purer product of the Roman mind. Even the infancy of Rome was

* In addition to the arguments lately urged in the *Quarterly Review*, for bastardizing and degrading the early history of Rome, I may here mention two others, alleged many years ago in conversation by a friend of mine. 1. *The immoderate length of time assigned to the reigns of the kings.* For though it is possible that one king's reign may cover two entire generations (as that of George III.), or even two and a half (as that of Louis XIV.), yet it is in the highest degree improbable that a series of seven kings, immediately consecutive, should average, in the most favourable cases, more than twenty-four years for each: for the proof of which, see the Collective Chronology of Ancient and Modern Europe. 2. *The dramatic and artificial casting of the parts of these kings.* Each steps forward as a scenical person, to play a distinct part or character. One makes Rome; another makes laws; another makes an army; another, religious rites, &c. And last of all comes a gentleman who "enacts the brute part" of destroying, in effect, what his predecessors had constructed; and thus furnishes a decorous catastrophe for the whole play and a magnificent birth for the republican form of government.

like the cradle of Hercules, glorified by splendid marvels,—"Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre." For their sayings, for their anecdotes, their serious bon-mots, there are none equal to the Roman in grandeur. "Englishman!" said a Frenchman once to me, "you that contest our claim to the sublime, and contend that 'la manière noble' of our artists wears a falsetto character, what do you think of that saying of a king of ours, That it became not the King of France to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans (that is, of himself, under that title)?" "Think!" said I, "why, I think it is a magnificent and regal speech; and such is my English generosity, that I heartily wish the Emperor Hadrian had not said the same thing fifteen hundred years before."* I would willingly give five shillings myself to purchase the copyright of the saying for the French nation; for *they* want it, and the Romans could spare it. Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt! Cursed be the name of Hadrian, that stands between France and the sublimest of bon-mots! Where, again, will you find a more adequate expression of the Roman majesty than

* Submonente quodam ut in pristinos inimicos animadverteret, negavit se ita facturum? adjectâ civili voce,—Minime licere Principi Romano, ut quæ privatus agitasset odia—ista Imperator exequi. *Spartian in Had.*—Vid. Histor. August.

in the saying of Trajan—Imperatorem oportere stantem mori—that Cæsar ought to die standing, a speech of imperatorial grandeur; implying that he, who was "the foremost man of all this world," and, in regard to all other nations, the representative of his own, should express its characteristic virtue in his farewell act,—should die *in procinctu*, and should meet the last enemy,* as the first, with a Roman countenanee, and in a soldier's attitude. If this had 'an imperatorial, what follows had a consular majesty, and is almost the grandest story upon record. Marius, the man who rose *à caligâ* to be seven times consul, was in a dungeon, and a slave was sent in with commission to put him to death. These were the persons,—the two extremities of exalted and forlorn humanity, its vanward and its rearward man, a Roman consul and

* Neither let it be objected, that it is irrational to oppose what there is no chance of opposing with success. When the Roman Senate kept their seats immovably upon the entrance of the Gauls reeking from the storm of Rome, they did it not, as supposing that this spectacle of senatorial dignity could disarm the wrath of their savage enemy; if they had, their act would have lost all its splendour. The language of their conduct was this: So far as the grandeur of the will is concerned, we have carried our resistance to the last extremity, and have expressed it in the way suitable to our rank. For all beyond we are not answerable; and, having recorded our "protest" in such an emphatic language, death becomes no dishonour. The *stantem mori* expresses the same principle, but in a symbolic act.

an abject slave. But their natural relations to each other were, by the caprice of fortune, monstrously inverted. The consul was in chains: the slave was for a moment the arbiter of his fate. By what spells, what magic, did Marius reinstate himself in his natural prerogatives? By what marvels, drawn from heaven or from earth, did he, in the twinkling of an eye, again invest himself with the purple, and place between himself and his assassin a host of shadowy lictors? By the mere blank supremacy of great minds over weak ones. He *fascinated* the slave, as a rattlesnake does a bird. Standing "like Teneriffe," he smote him with his eye, and said, "Tunc, homo, audes occidere C. Marium?" Dost thou, fellow, presume to kill Caius Marius? Whereat the reptile, quaking under the voice, nor daring to affront the consular eye, sank gently to the ground, turned round upon his hands and feet, and, crawling out of the prison like any other vermin, left Marius standing in solitude, as steadfast and immovable as the capitol.

In such anecdotes as these it is—in the actions of trying emergencies and their appropriate circumstances—that I find the revelation of the Roman mind under its highest aspect. The Roman mind was great in the presence of man, mean in the presence of nature; impotent to comprehend or to delineate the internal strife of

*passion*,* but powerful beyond any other national mind to display the energy of the *will* victorious over all passion. Hence it is, that the true Roman sublime exists nowhere in such purity as in those works which were *not* composed with a reference to Grecian models. On this account, I wholly dissent from the shallow classification which expresses the relations of merit between the writers of the Augustan period and that which followed, under the type of a golden and silver age. As artists, and with reference to composition, no doubt many of the writers of the latter age were rightly so classed; but an inferiority *quoad hoc* argues no uniform and absolute inferiority; and the fact is, that, in weight and grandeur of thought, the silver writers were much superior to the golden. Indeed, this might have been looked for on *à priori* grounds; for the silver writers were more truly Roman writers from two causes: first, because they trusted more to their own native style of thinking, and, looking less anxiously to Grecian archetypes, they wrote more naturally, feelingly, and originally; secondly, because the political circumstances of their times were advantageous, and liberated them from the suspicious caution which cramped the natural movements

* So palpable is this truth, that the most unreflecting critics have hence been led to suspect the pretensions of the Atys to a Roman origin.

of a Roman mind on the first establishment of the monarchy. Whatever outrages of despotism occurred in the times of the silver writers were sudden, transient, capricious, and personal, in their origin and in their direction; but, in the Augustan age, it was not the temper of Augustus, personally, and certainly not the temper of the writers leading them to any excesses of licentious speculation, which created the danger of bold thinking. The danger was in the times, which were unquiet and revolutionary. The struggle with the republican party was yet too recent; the wounds and cicatrices of the State too green; the existing order of things too immature and critical: the triumphant party still viewed *as a* party, and for that cause still feeling itself a party militant. Augustus had that chronic complaint of a "crick in the neck," of which later princes are said to have an acute attack every 30th of January. Hence a servile and timid tone in the literature. The fiercer republicans could not be safely mentioned. Even Cicero it was not decorous to praise; and Virgil, as perhaps you know, has, by insinuation, contrived to insult* his memory in the *Æneid*. But, as the irresponsible power of the

* Orabunt alii causas melius. *Æn.* VI.—An opinion upon the Grecian superiority in this point, which is so doubtful even to us in our perfect impartiality at this day, as a general opinion without discrimination of persons, that we may be sure it could not spontaneously have occurred to a Roman in

emperors grew better secured, their jealousy of republican sentiment abated much of its keenness. And, considering that republican freedom of thought was the very matrix of Roman sublimity, it ought not to surprise us, that as fast as the national mind was lightened from the pressure which weighed upon the natural style of its sentiment, the literature should recoil into a freer movement, with an elasticity proportioned to the intensity and brevity of its depression. Accordingly, in Seneca the philosopher, in Lucan, in Tacitus, even in Pliny the Younger, &c., but especially the two first, I affirm that there is a loftiness of thought more eminently and characteristically Roman than in any preceding writers: and in *that* view to rank them as writers of a silver age, is worthy only of those who are servile to the commonplaces of unthinking criticism.

The style of thought in the silver writers, as a raw material, was generally more valuable than that of their predecessors, however much they fell below them in the art of working up that

a burst of patriotic feeling, and must have been deliberately manufactured to meet the malignant wishes of Augustus. More especially because, in whatever relation of opposition or of indifference to the principles of a military government, to the Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos, Virgil might view the fine arts of painting, statuary, &c., he could not but have viewed the arts of forensic eloquence as standing in the closest alliance with that principle.

material. And I shall add further, that, when I admit the vast defects of Luther, for instance, as an artist, I would not be understood as involving in that concession the least toleration of the vulgar doctrine, that the diction of the silver writers is in any respect below the standard of pure Latinity as existing in the writers of the Ciceronian age. A better structure of Latinity, I will affirm boldly, does not exist than that of Petronius Arbiter: and taken as a body, the writers of what is denominated the silver age are for diction no less Roman, and for thought much more intensely Roman, than any other equal number of writers from the preceding ages; and, with a very few exceptions, are the best fitted to take a permanent station in the regard of men at your age or mine, when the meditative faculties, if they exist at all, are apt to expand, and to excite a craving for a greater weight of thought than is usually to be met with in the elder writers of the Roman literature. This explanation made, and having made that "amende honorable" to the Roman literature which my own gratitude demanded, I come to the remaining part of my business in this letter, namely, the grounds of choice amongst the languages of modern Europe. Reserving to my conclusion anything I have to say upon these *languages*, as depositories of *literature* properly so called, I shall first speak of them as depositories

of *knowledge*. Among the four great races of men in Europe, namely—1. The Celtic, occupying a few of the western extremities* of Europe; 2. The Teutonic, occupying the northern and midland parts;† 3. The Latin (blended with Teutonic tribes) occupying the south;‡ and, 4. The Sclavonic, occupying the east, it is evident that of the first and the last it is unnecessary to say anything in this place, because their pretensions to literature do not extend to our present sense of the word. No Celt even, however extravagant, pretends to the possession of a body of Celtic philosophy and Celtic science of independent growth. The Celtic and Slavonic languages therefore dismissed, our business at present is with those of the Latin and the Teutonic families. Now three of the Latin family, namely, the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, are at once excluded for the purpose before us: because it is notorious that, from

* Namely: 1. In the Cornish, Welsh, Manx, Highland, Scotch, and Irish provinces of the British empire (in the first and last it is true that the barbarous Celtic blood has been too much improved by Teutonic admixture, to allow of our considering the existing races as purely Celtic; this, however, does not affect the classification of their genuine literary relics); 2. In Biscay; and 3. In Basse Bretagne (Armorica): to say nothing of a Celtic district said to exist in the Alps, &c.

† Namely: Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, England, and Scotch Lowlands.

‡ Namely: Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal.

political and religious causes, these three nations have but feebly participated in the general scientific and philosophic labours of the age. Italy, indeed, has cultivated natural philosophy with an exclusive zeal; a direction probably impressed upon the national mind by patriotic reverence for her great names in that department. But, merely for the sake of such knowledge (supposing no other motive), it would be idle to pay the price of learning a language,—all the current contributions to science being regularly gathered into the general garner of Europe by the scientific journals both at home and abroad. Of the Latin languages, therefore, which are wholly the languages of Catholic nations, but one—that is, the French—can present any sufficient attractions to a student in search of general knowledge. Of the Teutonic literatures, on the other hand, which are the adequate representatives of the Protestant intellectual interest in Europe (no Catholic nations speaking a Teutonic language except the southern states of Germany and part of the Netherlands), all give way at once to the paramount pretensions of the English and the German. I do not say this with the levity of ignorance, as if presuming, as a matter of course, that in a small territory, such as Denmark, *e.g.*, the literature must, of necessity, bear a value proportioned to its political rank. On the contrary, I have some acquaintance with

the Danish literature;* and though, in the proper sense of the word literature, as a body of creative art, I cannot esteem it highly; yet as a depository of knowledge in one particular direction—namely, the direction of historical and antiquarian research it has, undoubtedly, high claims upon the student's attention. But this is a direction in which a long series of writers descending from a remote antiquity is of more importance than a great contemporary body; whereas, for the cultivation of knowledge in a more comprehensive sense, and arrived at its present stage, large simultaneous efforts are of more importance than the longest

* I take this opportunity of mentioning a curious fact which I ascertained about twelve years ago, when studying the Danish. The English and Scotch philologists have generally asserted that the Danish invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries, and their settlements in various parts of the island (as Lincolnshire, Cumberland, etc.), had left little or no traces of themselves in the language. This opinion has been lately reasserted in Dr. Murray's work on the European languages. It is, however, inaccurate. For the remarkable dialect spoken amongst the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, together with the names of the mountains, tarns, &c., most of which resist all attempts to unlock their meaning from the Anglo-Saxon, or any other form of the Teutonic, are pure Danish—generally intelligible from the modern Danish of this day, but in all cases from the elder form of the Danish. Whenever my *Opera Omnia* are collected, I shall reprint a little memoir on this subject, which I inserted about four years ago in a provincial newspaper: or possibly before that event, for the amusement of the lake tourists, Mr. Wordsworth may do me the favour to accept it as an appendix to his work on the English lakes.

successive efforts. Now, for such a purpose, it is self-evident that the means at the disposal of every State must be in due proportion to its statistical rank; for not only must the scientific institutions, the purchasers of books, &c., keep pace with the general progress of the country, but commerce alone, and the arts of life, which are so much benefited by science, naturally react upon science in a degree proportioned to the wealth of every State, in their demand for the aids of chemistry, mechanics, engineering, &c. &c.; a fact with its inevitable results, to which I need scarcely call your attention. Moreover, waiving all mere presumptive arguments, the bare amount of books annually published in the several countries of Europe puts the matter out of all doubt, that the great commerce of thought and knowledge in the civilized world is at this day conducted in three languages—the English, the German, and the French. You, therefore, having the good fortune to be an Englishman, are to make your choice between the two last; and this being so, I conceive that there is no room for hesitation,—the "detur pulchriori" being, in this case (that is, remember, with an exclusive reference to *knowledge*), a direction easily followed.

Dr. Johnson was accustomed to say of the French literature, as the kindest thing he had to say about it, that he valued it chiefly for this

reason—that it had a book upon every subject. How far this might be a reasonable opinion fifty years ago, and understood, as Dr. Johnson must have meant it, of the French literature, as compared with the English of the same period, I will not pretend to say. It has certainly ceased to be true, even under these restrictions, and is in flagrant opposition to the truth, if extended to the French in its relation to the German. Undoubtedly the French literature holds out to the student some peculiar advantages, as what literature does not?—some, even, which we should not have anticipated; for, though we justly value ourselves as a nation upon our classical education, yet no literature is poorer than the English in the learning of classical antiquities,—our Bentleys, even, and our Porsons, having thrown all their learning into the channel of philology; whilst a single volume of the Memoirs of the French Academy of Inscriptions contains more useful antiquarian research than a whole English library. In digests of history, again, the French language is richer than ours, and in their dictionaries of miscellaneous knowledge (*not* in their encyclopædias). But all these are advantages of the French only in relation to the English, and not to the German literature, which, for vast compass, variety, and extent, far exceeds all others as a depository for the current accumulations of know-

ledge. The mere number of books published annually in Germany, compared with the annual product of France and England, is alone a satisfactory evidence of this assertion. With relation to France, it is a second argument in its favour, that the intellectual activity of Germany is not intensely accumulated in one great capital, as it is in Paris; but whilst it is here and there converged intensely enough for all useful purposes (as at Berlin, Königsberg, Leipsic, Dresden, Vienna, Munich, etc.), it is also healthily diffused over the whole territory. There is not a sixth-rate town in Protestant Germany which does not annually contribute its quota of books. Intellectual culture has manured the whole soil: not a district but it has penetrated,

"Like Spring,
Which leaves no corner of the land untouched."

A third advantage on the side of Germany (an advantage for this purpose) is its division into a great number of independent states. From this circumstance, it derives the benefit of an internal rivalship amongst its several members, over and above that general external rivalship which it maintains with other nations. An advantage of the same kind we enjoy in England. The British nation is fortunately split into three great divisions, and thus a national feeling of emulation and contest is excited,—slight, indeed, or none at all on

the part of the English (not from any merit, but from mere decay of patriotic feeling), stronger on the part of the Irish, and sometimes illiberally and odiously strong on the part of the Scotch (especially as you descend below the rank of a gentleman.) But, disgusting as it sometimes is in its expression, this nationality is of great service to our efforts in all directions. A triple power is gained for internal excitement of the national energies; whilst, in regard to any external enemy or any external rival, the three nations act with the unity of a single force. But the most conspicuous advantage of the German literature is its great originality and boldness of speculation, and the character of masculine austerity and precision impressed upon their scientific labours by the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolff heretofore, and by the severer philosophy of modern days. Speaking of the German literature at all, it would be mere affectation to say nothing on the subject so far-famed and so much misrepresented as this. Yet, to summon myself to an effort of this kind at a moment of weariness and exhausted attention, would be the certain means of inflicting great weariness upon you. For the present, therefore, I take my leave.

## LETTER V.

My dear Sir,—In my last letter, having noticed the English, the German, and the French, as the three languages in which the great commerce of thought and knowledge in the civilized world is at this day conducted, and having attributed three very considerable advantages to the German as compared with the French, I brought forward in conclusion, as an advantage more conspicuous even than any I had before insisted on, the great originality and boldness of speculation which have distinguished the philosophic researches of Germany for the last hundred and fifty years.* On this point, as it stood opposed to some prejudices and gross mis-statements among ourselves, I naturally declined to speak at the close of a letter which had, perhaps, already exhausted your attention. But, as it would be mere affectation wholly to evade a question about which so much interest† has gathered, and an interest which, from

* Dating from the earliest works of Leibnitz, rather more.

† I have heard it alleged as a reason why no great interest in the German philosophy can exist or can be created amongst the English, that "there is no demand for books on that subject:" in which remark there is a singular confusion of thought. Was there any "demand" for the Newtonian philosophy, until the Newtonian philosophy appeared? How should there be any "demand" for books which do not

its objects and grounds, must be so durable, I gave you reason to expect that I would say a few words on that which is at this time understood by the term *German Philosophy*, that is, the philosophy of Kant. This I shall now do. But, let me remind you for what purpose, that you may not lay to my charge, as a fault, *that* limited notice of my subject which the nature and proportions of my plan prescribe. In a short letter it cannot be supposed possible, if it were otherwise right on this occasion, that I should undertake an analysis of a philosophy so comprehensive as to leave no

exist? But, considering the lofty pretensions of the Kantean philosophy, it would argue a gross ignorance of human nature to suppose, that no interest had already attended the statement of these pretensions whenever they have been made known; and, in fact, amongst thoughtful and intellectual men a very deep interest has long existed on the subject, as my own experience has been sufficient to convince me. Indeed, what evidence could be alleged more strong of apathy and decay in all intellectual activity, and in all honourable direction of intellectual interests, than the possibility that a systematic philosophy should arise in a great nation near to our own, and should claim to have settled for ever many of the weightiest questions which concern the dignity and future progress of the human species, and should yet attract no attention or interest? We may be assured, that no nation not thoroughly emasculated in power of mind—that is, so long as any severe studies survive amongst her—can ever be so far degraded. But these judgments come of attending too much to the movements of what is called "the literary world:" literature very imperfectly represents the intellectual interests of any people; and literary people are, in a large proportion, as little intellectual people as any one meets with.

track of legitimate interests untouched, and so profound as to presuppose many preparatory exercises of the understanding. What the course of my subject demands is, that I should liberate the name and reputation of the Kantean philosophy from any delusion which may collect about its purposes and pretensions, through the representations of those who have spoken of it amongst ourselves. The case is this: I have advised you to pay a special attention to the German literature, as a literature of knowledge, not of power; and, amongst other reasons for this advice, I have alleged the high character and pretensions of its philosophy. But these pretensions have been met by attacks, or by gross misrepresentations, from all writers, within my knowledge, who have at all noticed the philosophy in this country. So far as these have fallen in your way, they must naturally have indisposed you to my advice; and it becomes, therefore, my business to point out any facts which may tend to disarm the authority of these writers, just so far as to replace you in the situation of a neutral and unprejudiced student.

The persons who originally introduced the Kantean philosophy to the notice of the English public, or rather attempted to do so, were two Germans—Dr. Willich and (not long after) Dr. Nitsch. Dr. Willich, I think, has been gone to Hades for these last dozen years; certainly his

works have: and Dr. Nitsch, though not gone to Hades, is gone (I understand) to Germany, which answers my purpose as well; for it is not likely that a few words uttered in London will contrive to find out a man buried in the throng of thirty million Germans. *Quoad hoc*, therefore, Dr. Nitsch may be considered no less defunct than Dr. Willich; and I can run no risk of wounding anybody's feelings, if I should pronounce both doctors very eminent blockheads. It is difficult to say which wrote the more absurd book. Willich's is a mere piece of book-making, and deserves no sort of attention. But Nitsch, who seems to have been a painstaking man, has produced a work which is thus far worthy of mention, that it reflects as in a mirror one feature common to most of the German commentaries upon Kant's works, and which it is right to expose. With very few exceptions, these works are constructed upon one simple principle. Finding it impossible to obtain any glimpse of Kant's meaning or drift, the writers naturally asked themselves what was to be done. Because a man does not understand one iota of his author, is he therefore not to comment upon him? That were hard indeed; and a sort of abstinence which it is more easy to recommend than to practise. Commentaries must be written; and, if not by those who understand the system (which would be the best plan),

then (which is clearly the second-best plan) by those who do *not* understand it. Dr. Nitsch belonged to this latter very respectable body, for whose great numerical superiority to their rivals I can take upon myself to vouch. Being of their body, the worthy doctor adopted their expedient, which is simply this: never to deliver any doctrine except in the master's words; on all occasions to parrot the *ipsissima verba* of Kant; and not even to venture upon the experiment of a new illustration drawn from their own funds. Pretty nearly upon this principle was it that the wretched Brucker and others have constructed large histories of philosophy. Having no comprehension of the inner meaning and relations of any philosophic opinion, nor suspecting to what it tended, or in what necessities of the intellect it had arisen, how could the man do more than superstituously adhere to that formula of words in which it had pleased the philosopher to clothe it? It was unreasonable to expect he should. To require of him that he should present it in any new aspect of his own devising would have been tempting him into dangerous and perplexing situations: it would have been, in fact, a downright aggression upon his personal safety, and calling upon him to become *felo de se*. Every turn of a sentence might risk his breaking down; and no man is bound to risk his neck, credit, or under-

standing, for the benefit of another man's neck. credit, or understanding. "It's all very well," Dr. Nitsch and his brethren will say,—"It's all very well for you, gentlemen, that have no commenting to do, to understand your author; but, to expect us to understand him also, that have to write commentaries on him for two, four, and all the way up to twelve volumes 8vo, just serves to show how far the unreasonableness of human nature can go." The Doctor was determined on moral principles to make no compromise with such unreasonableness; and, in common with all his brethren, set his face against understanding each and every chapter, paragraph, or sentence, of Kant, so long as they were expected to do duty as commentators. I treat the matter ludicrously; but, in substance, I assure you that I do no wrong to the learned commentators;* and, under such auspices, you will not suppose that Kant

* Under this denomination, I comprehend all the rabble of abbreviators, abstractors, dictionary-makers, etc. etc., attached to the establishment of the Kantean philosophy. One of the last, by the way, Schmidt, the author of a Kantean dictionary, may be cited as the *beau idéal* of Kantean commentators. He was altogether agreed with Dr. Nitsch upon the duty of not understanding one's author; and acted up to his principle through life—being, in fact, what the Cambridge men call a *Bergen-op-zoom*, that is, one that sturdily defies his author, stands a siege of twelve or twenty years upon his understanding, and holds out to the last, impregnable to all the assaults of reason or argument, and the heaviest batteries of common sense.

came before the English public with any advantage of patronage. Between two such supporters as a Nitsch on the right hand, and a Willich on the left, I know not *that* philosopher that would escape foundering. But, fortunately for Kant, the supporters themselves foundered; and no man that ever I met with had seen or heard of their books, or seen any man that *had* seen them. It did not appear that they were, or, logically speaking, could be forgotten; for no man had ever remembered them.

The two doctors having thus broken down, and set off severally to Hades and Germany, I recollect no authors of respectability who have since endeavoured to attract the attention of the English public to the Kantean philosophy, except — 1. An anonymous writer in an early number of the *Edinburgh Review;* 2. Mr. Coleridge; 3. Mr. Dugald Stewart; 4. Madame de Staël, in a work published, I believe originally in this country, and during her residence amongst us. I do not add Sir William Drummond to this list, because my recollection of anything he has written on the subject of Kant (in his Academical Questions) is very imperfect; nor Mr. W— the reputed author of an article on Kant (the most elaborate, I am told, which at present exists in the English language) in the Encyclopædia Londinensis; for this essay, together with a few other notices of Kant in other encyclopædias, or elsewhere, have

not happened to fall in my way. The four writers above mentioned were certainly the only ones on this subject who commanded sufficient influence, either directly in their own persons, or (as in the first case) vicariously in the channel through which the author communicated with the public, considerably to affect the reputation of Kant in this country for better or worse. None of the four, except Mr. Coleridge, having, or professing to have, any direct acquaintance with the original works of Kant, but drawing their information from imbecile French books, etc., it would not be treating the other three with any injustice to dismiss their opinions without notice; for, even upon any one philosophical question, much more upon the fate of a great philosophical system supposed to be *sub judice*, it is as unworthy of a grave and thoughtful critic to rely upon the second-hand report of a flashy rhetorician, as it would be unbecoming and extra-judicial in a solemn trial to occupy the ear of the court with the gossip of a country town.

However, to omit no point of courtesy to any of these writers, I shall say a word or two upon each of them separately. The first and the third wrote in a spirit of hostility to Kant; the second and fourth, as friends. In that order I shall take them. The writer of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, I suppose, upon the internal evidence, to

have been the late Dr. Thomas Brown, a pupil of Mr. Dugald Stewart's, and his successor in the Moral Philosophy chair at Edinburgh. This is a matter of no importance in itself; nor am I in the habit of troubling myself or others with literary gossip of that sort; but I mention it as a conjecture of my own; because, if I happen to be right, it would be a very singular fact, that the only two writers within my knowledge who have so far forgot the philosophic character as to attempt an examination of a vast and elaborate system of philosophy, not in the original, not in any authorized or accredited Latin version (of which there were two even at that time), not in any version at all, but in the tawdry rhetoric of a Parisian *philosophie à la mode*, a sort of *philosophie pour les dames*,—that these two writers, thus remarkably agreeing in their readiness to forget the philosophic character, should also happen to have stood nearly connected in literary life. In such coincidences we suspect something more than a blind accident; we suspect the natural tendency of their philosophy, and believe ourselves furnished with a measure of its power to liberate the mind from rashness, from caprice, and injustice, in such deliberate acts, which it either suggests or tolerates. If their own philosophic curiosity was satisfied with information so slender, mere justice required that they should not, on so slight and

suspicious a warrant, have grounded anything in disparagement of the philosophy or its founder. The book reviewed by the Edinburgh reviewer, and relied on for his account of the Kantean philosophy, is the essay of Villars; a book so entirely childish, that perhaps no mortification more profound could have fallen upon the reviewer than the discovery of the extent to which he had been duped by his author. Of this book no more needs to be said than that the very terms do not occur in it which express the hinges of the system. Mr. Stewart has confided chiefly in Dégérando; a much more sober-minded author, of more good sense, and a greater zeal for truth, but, unfortunately, with no more ability to penetrate below the surface of the Kantean system. M. Dégérando is represented as an unexceptionable evidence by Mr. Stewart, on the ground that he is admitted to be so by Kant's "countrymen." The "countrymen" of Kant,* merely *as* country-

* The reader may suppose that this could not possibly have been the meaning of Mr. Stewart. But a very general mistake exists as to the terminology of Kant—as though a foreigner must find some difficulties in it which are removed to a native. "His own countrymen," says a respectable literary journal, when speaking of Kant (*Edinburgh Monthly Review* for August 1820, p. 168)—"His own countrymen find it difficult to comprehend his meaning; and they dispute about it to this day." Why not? The terminology of Kant is partly Grecian, partly scholastic; and how should either become intelligible to a German *qua* German, merely because they are fitted with German terminations and inflexions?

men, can have no more title to an opinion upon this point than a Grantham man could have a right to dogmatize on Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy, on the ground that he was a fellow-townsman of Sir Isaac's. The air of Königsberg makes no man a philosopher. But, if Mr. Stewart means that the competency of M. Dégérando has been admitted by those countrymen of Kant's whose educations have fitted them to understand him, and whose writings make it evident that they *have* understood him (such, for instance, as Reinhold, Schulze, Tieftrunk, Beck, Fichte, and Schelling), then he has been misinformed. The mere existence of such works as the *Histoire Comparee* of M. Dégérando, which cannot be regarded in a higher light than that of verbal indices to the corpus philosophiæ, is probably unknown to them; certainly, no books of that popular class are ever noticed by any of them, nor could rank higher in their eyes than an elementary school algebra in the eyes of a mathematician. If any man acknowledges Dégérando's attempt at a popular abstract of Kant as a sound one, *ipso facto*, he degrades himself from the right to any opinion upon the matter. The elementary notions of Kant, even the main problem of his great work, are not once so much as alluded to by Dégérando. And, by the way, if any man ever talks in your presence about Kant,

and you suspect that he is talking without knowledge, and wish to put a stop to him, I will tell you how you shall effect that end. Say to him as follows: Sir, I am instructed by my counsel, learned in this matter, that the main problem of the philosophy you are talking of lies involved in the term *transcendental*, and that it may be thus expressed: "*An detur aliquid transcendentale in mente humanâ*,"—"Is there in the human mind anything which realizes the notion of *transcendental* (as that notion is regulated and used by Kant)?" Now, as this makes it necessary above all things to master that notion in the fullest sense, I will thank you to explain it to me. And, as I am further instructed that the answer to this question is affirmative, and is involved in the term *synthetic unity*, I will trouble you to make it clear to me wherein the difference lies between this and what is termed *analytic unity*. Thus speaking, you will in all probability gag him; which is, at any rate, one desirable thing gained, when a man insists on disturbing a company by disputing and talking philosophy.

But, to return: as there must always exist a strong presumption against philosophy of Parisian manufacture (which is in that department the Birmingham ware of Europe); secondly, as M. Dégérando had expressly admitted (in fact, boasted) that he had a little trimmed and em-

bellished the Kantean system, in order to fit it for the society of "*les gens comme il faut*;" and, finally, as there were Latin versions, etc., of Kant, it must reasonably occur to any reader to ask why Mr. Stewart should not have consulted these. To this question Mr. Stewart answers, that he could not tolerate their "barbarous" style and nomenclature. I must confess that in such an answer I see nothing worthy of a philosopher; and should rather have looked for it from a literary *petit maître* than from an emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy. Will a philosopher decline a useful experiment in physics because it will soil his kid gloves? Who thinks or cares about style in such studies, that is sincerely and anxiously in quest of truth?* In fact, *style*, in any proper sense, is no more a possible thing in such investigations as the understanding is summoned to by Kant, than it is in Euclid's Elements. As to the nomenclature again, supposing that it *had* been barbarous, who objects to the nomenclature of modern chemistry, which is, *quoad*

* The diction of the particular book which had been recommended to Mr. Stewart's attention, namely, the *Expositio Systematica* of Phiseldek, a Danish professor, has all the merits which a philosophic diction can have, being remarkably perspicuous, precise, simple, and unaffected. It is too much of a mere metaphrase of Kant, and has too little variety of illustration: otherwise I do not know a better digest of the philosophy.

*materiam*, not only a barbarous, but a hybrid nomenclature? Wherever law and intellectual order prevail, they *debarbarize* (if I may be allowed such a coinage) what in its elements might be barbarous: the form ennobles the matter. But, how is the Kantean terminology barbarous, which is chiefly composed of Grecian or Latin terms? In constructing it, Kant proceeded in this way: where it was possible, he recalled obsolete and forgotten terms from the Platonic philosophy and from the schoolmen, or restored words abused by popular use to their original philosophic meaning. In other cases, when there happen to exist double expressions for the same notion, he called in and reminted them, as it were. In doing this, he was sometimes forestalled in part, and guided by the tendency of language itself. All languages, as it has been remarked, tend to clear themselves of synonymes as intellectual culture advances,—the superfluous words being taken up and appropriated by new shades and combinations of thought evolved in the progress of society. And, long before this appropriation is fixed and petrified, as it were, into the acknowledged vocabulary of the language, an insensible *clinamen* (to borrow a Lucretian word) prepares the way for it. Thus, for instance, long before Mr. Wordsworth had unveiled the great philosophic distinction between the powers of *fancy* and *imagination*, the two

words had begun to diverge from each other; the first being used to express a faculty somewhat capricious* and exempted from law, the latter to express a faculty more self-determined. When, therefore, it was at length perceived that under an apparent unity of meaning there lurked a real dualism, and for philosophic purposes it was necessary that this distinction should have its appropriate expression, this necessity was met half way by the *clinamen* which had already affected the popular usage of the words. So, again, in the words *Deist* and *Theist*; naturally, they should express the same notion: the one to a Latin, the other to a Grecian ear. But, of what use are such duplicates? It is well that the necessities of the understanding gradually reach all such cases by that insensible *clinamen* which fits them for a better purpose than that of extending the mere waste fertility of language, namely, by taking them up into the service of thought. In this instance *Deist* was used pretty generally throughout Europe to express the case of him

* Which distinction comes out still more strongly in the secondary derivative *fanciful*, and the primary derivative *fantastic*. I say primary derivative, in reference to the history of the word:—1, φαντασια, whence *phantasy*; 2, for metrical purposes, *phant'sy* (as it is usually spelt in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, and other scholarlike poems of that day): 3, by dropping the *t* in pronunciation; phansy or fancy. Now, from No. 1 comes *fantastic*; from No. 3 comes *fanciful*.

who admits a God, but under the fewest predicates that will satisfy the conditions of the understanding. A *Theist*, on the other hand, even in popular use, denoted him who admits a God with some further (transcendental) predicates; as, for example, under the relation of a moral governor to the world. In such cases as this, therefore, where Kant found himself already anticipated by the progress of language, he did no more than regulate and ordinate the evident *nisus* and tendency of the popular usage into a severe definition. Where, however, the notions were of too subtle a nature to be laid hold of by the popular understanding, and too little within the daily use of life to be ever affected by the ordinary causes which mould the course of a language, there he commenced and finished the process of separation himself.

And what were the uses of all this? Why, the uses were these: *first*, in relation to the whole system of the transcendental philosophy: the new notions which were thus fixed and recorded were necessary to the system; they were useful in proportion as *that* was useful, that is, in proportion as it was true. *Secondly*, they extended the domain of human thought, apart from the system and independently of it. A perpetual challenge or summons is held out to the mind in the Kantean terminology to clear up and regulate its own con-

ceptions, which, without discipline, are apt from their own subtle affinities to blend and run into each other. The new distinctions are so many intellectual problems to be mastered. And, even without any view to a formal study of the transcendental philosophy, great enlargement would be given to the understanding by going through a Kantean dictionary, well explained and well illustrated.* This terminology, therefore, was useful: 1. As a means to an end (being part of the system); 2. As an end in itself. So much for the uses. As to the power of mind put forth in constructing it (between which and the uses lies the valuation of Kant's service; for, if no uses, then we do not thank him for any difficulty he may have overcome; if no difficulty be overcome, then we do not ascribe as a merit to him any uses which may flow from it),—as to the power of mind put forth in constructing it, I do not think it likely that you will make the same mistake which I have heard from some unreflecting persons, and which, in fact, lurks at the bottom of much that has been written against Kant's obscurity, as though Kant had done no more than impose new names, Certainly, if that were all, the merit would not be very conspicuous. It

* In some cases it is true, that the construction of the ideas is posterior to the system, and presupposes a knowledge of it, rather than precedes it; but this is not generally true.

would cost little effort of mind to say, Let this be A, and that be D: let this notion be called *transcendent*, and that be called *transcendental*. Such a statement, however, supposes the ideas to be already known and familiar, and simply to want names. In this lies the blunder. When Kant assigned the names, he created the ideas; that is, he drew them within the consciousness. In assigning to the complex notion X the name *transcendental*, Kant was not simply transferring a word which had previously been used by the schoolmen to a more useful office; he was bringing into the service of the intellect a new birth; that is, drawing into a synthesis, which had not existed before *as* a synthesis, parts or elements which exist and come forward hourly in every man's mind. I urge this upon your attention, because you will often hear such challenges thrown out as this (or others involving the same error), "Now, if there be any sense in this Mr. Kant's writings, let us have it in good old mother English." That is, in other words, transfer into the unscientific language of life scientific notions and relations which it is not fitted to express. The challenger proceeds upon the common error of supposing all ideas fully developed to exist *in esse* in all understandings, *ergo*, in his own; and all that are in his own he thinks that we can express in English. Thus

the challenger, on his notions, has you in a dilemma; at any rate; for, if you do not translate it, then it confirms his belief that the whole is jargon; if you *do* (as, doubtless, with the help of much periphrasis, you may translate it into English, that will be intelligible to a man who already understands the philosophy), then where was the use of the new terminology? But the way to deal with this fellow is as follows: My good sir, I shall do what you ask; but, before I do it, I beg that you will oblige me by—1. Translating this mathematics into the language of chemistry; 2. By translating this chemistry into the language of mathematics; 3. Both into the language of cookery; and, finally, solve me the Cambridge problem, "Given the captain's name, and the year of our Lord, to determine the longitude of the ship." This is the way to deal with such fellows.

The terminology of Kant, then, is not a rebaptism of ideas already existing in the universal consciousness; it is in part an enlargement of the understanding by new territory (of which I have spoken), and in part a better regulation of its old territory. This regulation is either negative, and consists in limiting more accurately the boundary-line of conceptions that had hitherto been perfectly defined; or its positive, and consists in the substitutions of names which express the relations

and dependencies of the object* (*termini organici*) for the conventional names which have arisen from accident, and do *not* express those relations (*termini bruti*). It is on this principle, that the nomenclature of chemistry is constructed: substances that were before known by arbitrary and non-significant names are now known by systematic names; that is, such as express their relations to other parts of the system. In this way a terminology becomes, in a manner, organic; and, being itself a product of an advanced state of the science, is an important re-agent for facilitating further advances.

These are the benefits of a sound terminology; to which let me add, that no improved terminology can ever be invented—nay, hardly any plausible one—which does not pre-suppose an improved

* In a conversation which I once had with the late Bishop of Llandaff, on the subject of Kant, he objected chiefly to the terminology, and assigned as one instance of what seemed to him needless innovations, the word *apperception*. "If this word means self-consciousness," said he, "I do not see why Mr. Kant might not have contented himself with what contented his father." But the truth is, that this word exactly illustrates the explanation made above; it expresses one fact in a system *sub ratione*, and with a retrospect to another. This would have been the apology for the word: however, in this particular instance, I chose rather to apologize for Kant, by alleging that Wolff and Leibnitz had used the word; so that it was an established word before the birth of the transcendental philosophy, and it might, therefore, be doubted whether Mr. Kant, senior, *had* contented himself in this case with less than Mr. Kant, junior

theory. Now, surely benefits such as these ought to outweigh any offence to the ears or the taste, if there were any. But the elegance of coherency is the sole elegance which a terminology needs to possess, or indeed can possess. The understanding is, in this case, the arbiter; and where *that* approves, it must be a misplaced fastidiousness of feeling which does not submit itself to the presiding faculty. As an instance of a repulsive terminology, I would cite that of Aristotle, which has something harsh and technical in it that prevents it from ever blending with the current of ordinary language; even to this, however, so far as it answers its purposes, the mind soon learns to reconcile itself. But here, as in other more important points, the terminology of Kant is advantageously distinguished from the Aristotelian, by adapting itself with great ductility to any variety of structure and arrangement incident to a philosophic diction.

I have spoken so much at length on the subject of Kant's terminology, because this is likely to be the first stumbling-block to the student of his philosophy; and because it has been, in fact, the main subject of attack amongst those who have noticed it in this country; if *that* can be called attack which proceeds in acknowledged ignorance of the original works.

A much more serious attack upon Kant has

been the friendly notice of Madame de Staël. The sources from which she drew her opinions were understood to be the two Schlegels, and, probably, M. Dégérando. Like some countrymen of Kant's (*e. g.* Kiesewetter), she has contrived to translate his philosophy into a sense which leaves it tolerably easy to apprehend; but unfortunately at the expense of all definite purpose, applicability, or philosophic meaning. On the other hand, Mr. Coleridge, whose great philosophic powers and undoubted acquaintance with the works of Kant, would have fitted him beyond any man to have explained them to the English student, has unfortunately too little talent for teaching or communicating any sort of knowledge, and apparently too little simplicity of mind or zealous desire to do so. Hence it has happened, that, so far from assisting Kant's progress in this country, Mr. Coleridge must have retarded it by expounding the oracle in words of more Delphic obscurity than the German original could have presented to the immaturest student. It is, moreover, characteristic of Mr. Coleridge's mind that it never gives back anything as it receives it. All things are modified and altered in passing through his thoughts; and from this cause, I believe, combined with his aversion to continuous labour, arises his indisposition to mathematics; for *that* he must be content to take as he finds it.

Now, this indocility of mind greatly unfits a man to be the faithful expounder of a philosophic system; and it has, in fact, led Mr. Coleridge to make various misrepresentations of Kant. One only, as it might indispose you to pay any attention to Kant, I shall notice. In one of his works he has ascribed to Kant the foppery of an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine; and that upon grounds wholly untenable. The direct and simple-minded Kant, I am persuaded, would have been more shocked at this suspicion than any other with which he could have been loaded.

I throw the following remarks together, as tending to correct some of the deepest errors with which men come to the examination of philosophic systems, whether as students or as critics.

1. A good terminology will be one of the first results from a good theory; and hence, though a coherent terminology is not a sufficient evidence in favour of a system, the absence of such a terminology is a sufficient evidence against it.

2. It is asked which is the true philosophy. But this is not the just way of putting the question. The purpose of philosophy is not so much to accumulate positive truths in the first place, as to rectify the position of the human mind, and to correct its mode of seeing. The progress of the human species in this path is not direct, but oblique. One philosophy does not differ from

another solely by the amount of truth and error which it brings forward; there is none which has ever had much interest for the human mind but will be found to contain some truth of importance, or some approximation to it. One philosophy has differed from another rather by the station it has taken, and the aspect under which it has contemplated its object.

3. It has been objected to Kant, by some critics in this country, that his doctrines are, in some instances, reproductions only of doctrines brought forward by other philosophers. The instances alleged have been very unfortunate; but, doubtless, whatsoever truth is contained (according to the last remark) in the erroneous systems, and sometimes in the very errors themselves of the human mind, will be gathered up in its progress by the true system. Where the erroneous path has wandered in all directions, has returned upon itself perpetually, and crossed the field of inquiry with its mazes in every direction, doubtless the path of truth will often intersect it, and perhaps for a short distance coincide with it; but that in this coincidence it receives no impulse or determination from that with which it coincides, will appear from the self-determining force, which will soon carry it out of the same direction as inevitably as it entered it.

4. The test of a great philosophical system is

often falsely conceived. Men fancy a certain number of great outstanding problems of the highest interest to human nature, upon which every system is required to try its strength; and *that* will be the true one, they think, which solves them all; and *that* the best approximation to the true one which solves most. But this is a most erroneous way of judging. True philosophy will often have occasion to show, that these supposed problems are no problems at all, but mere impositions of the mind upon itself, arising out of its unrectified position—errors grounded upon errors. A much better test of a sound philosophy than the number of the pre-existing problems which it solves, will be the quality of those which it proposes. By raising the station of the spectator, it will bring a region of new inquiry within his view; and the very faculty of comprehending these questions will often depend on the station from which they are viewed. For, as the earlier and ruder problems that stimulate human curiosity often turn out baseless and unreal, so again the higher order of problems will be incomprehensible to the undisciplined understanding. This is a fact which should never be lost sight of by those who presume upon their natural and uncultivated powers of mind to judge of Kant, Plato, or any other great philosopher.

5. But the most general error which I have

ever met with, as a ground for unreasonable expectations in reference not to Kant only, but to all original philosophers, is the persuasion which men have, that their understandings contain already in full development all the notions which any philosophy can demand; and this not from any vanity, but from pure misconception. Hence they naturally think that all which the philosopher has to do is to point to the elements of the knowledge as they exist ready prepared, and forthwith the total knowledge of the one is transferred to any other mind. Watch the efforts of any man to master a new doctrine in philosophy, and you will find that involuntarily he addresses himself to the mere dialectic labour of transposing, dissolving, and re-combining, the notions which he already has. But it is not thus that any very important truth can be developed in the mind. New matter is wanted as well as new form. And the most important remark which I can suggest, as a caution to those who approach a great system of philosophy as if it were a series of riddles and their answers, is this: No complex or very important truth was ever yet transferred in full development from one mind to another. Truth of that character is not a piece of furniture to be shifted; it is a seed which must be sown, and pass through the several stages of growth. No doctrine of importance can be transferred in a matured shape

into any man's understanding from without: it must arise by an act of genesis within the understanding itself,

With this remark I conclude; and am, most truly yours.

# LANGUAGE.

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NO language is stationary, except in rude and early periods of society. The languages of nations like the English and French, walking in the van of civilisation, having popular institutions, and taking part in the business of the earth with morbid energy, are placed under the action of causes that will not allow them any respite from change. Neologism, in revolutionary times, is not an infirmity of caprice, seeking (to use the proverb of Cervantes) "for better bread than is made of wheat," but is a mere necessity of the unresting intellect. New ideas, new aspects of old ideas, new relations of objects to each other, or to man—the subject who contemplates those objects—absolutely insist on new words. And it would not be a more idle misconception to find a disease in the pains of growth, than to fancy a decay of vernacular purity in the multitude of verbal coinages which modern necessities of thought and action are annually calling forth on the banks of the Thames and the Seine.

Such coinages, however, do not all stand upon

the same basis of justification. Some are regularly formed from known roots upon known analogies; others are formed licentiously. Some again meet a real and clamorous necessity of the intellect; others are fitted to gratify the mere appetite for innovation. They take their rise in various sources, and are moulded with various degrees of skill. Let us throw a hasty glance on the leading classes of these coinages, and of the laws which appear to govern them, or of the anomalies with which they are sometimes associated. There are also large cases of innovation, in which no process of coinage whatever is manifested, but perhaps a simple restoration of old words, long since obsolete in literature and good society, yet surviving to this hour in provincial usage; or, again, an extension and emancipation of terms heretofore narrowly restricted to a technical or a professional use—as we see exemplified in the word *ignore*, which, until very lately, was so sacred to the sole use of grand juries, that a man would have been obscurely suspected by a policeman, and would, indeed, have suspected himself, of something like petty larceny in forcing it into any general and philosophic meaning, which, however, it has now assumed, with little offence to good taste, and with *yeoman* service to the intellect. Other cases, again, there are, and at present far too abundant, in which the necessities of social

intercourse, and not unfrequently the necessities of philosophic speculation, are provisionally supplied by *slang*, and the phraseology that is born and bred in the streets. The market-place and the highway, the *forum* and the *trivium*, are rich seed-plots for the sowing and the reaping of many indispensable ideas. That a phrase belongs to the slang dictionary is certainly no absolute recommendation; sometimes such a phrase may be simply disgusting from its vulgarity, without adding anything to the meaning or to the rhetorical force. How shocking to hear an official dignitary saying (as but yesterday *was* heard), "What *on earth* could the clause mean?" Yet neither is it any safe ground of absolute excommunication even from the sanctities of literature, that a phrase is entirely a growth of the street. The word *humbug*, for instance, rests upon a rich and comprehensive basis: it cannot be rendered adequately, either by German or by Greek, the two richest of human languages; and without this expressive word, we should all be disarmed for one great case, continually recurrent, of social enormity. A vast mass of villany, that cannot otherwise be reached by legal penalties, or brought within the rhetoric of scorn, would go at large with absolute impunity, were it not through the stern Rhadamanthian aid of this virtuous and inexorable word.

Meantime, as it would not suit the purposes of

a sketch to be too systematic in the treatment of a subject so inexhaustible as language and style, neither would it be within the limits of just proportion that I should be too elaborate in rehearsing beforehand the several avenues and classes of cases through which an opening is made for new words amongst ourselves or the French. I will select such cases for separate notice as seem most interesting or most seasonable. But previously, as a proper mode of awakening the reader into giving relief and just prominence to the subject, I will point attention to the varying scale of appreciation applied to the diction and the national language, as a ground of national distinction and honour, by the five great intellectual nations of ancient and modern history, viz., the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the English, and the Germans. In no country, except one, is such a preface more requisite than in England, where it is strange enough that, whilst the finest models of style exist, and sub-consciously operate effectively as sources of delight, the *conscious* valuation of style is least perfectly developed.

Every nation has reason to feel interested in the pretensions of its own native language; in the original quality of that language or characteristic *kind* of its powers; and in the particular *degree* of its expansion at the period in question. Even semi-barbarous tribes sometimes talk grandilo-

quently on this head, and ascribe to uncultivated jargons a fertility or a range of expressiveness quite incompatible with the particular stage of social development which the national capacities have reached. Not only in spite of its barbarism, but oftentimes in mere virtue of its barbarism, we find a language claiming, by its eulogists, to possess more than ordinary powers of picturesque expression. Such a claim is continually put forward on behalf of the Celtic languages, as, for instance, the Armoric, the Welsh, the Irish, the Manx, the Gaelic. Such a claim is put forward also for many oriental languages. Yet, in most of these cases, there is a profound mistake committed; and generally the same mistake. Without being strictly barbarous, all these languages are uncultivated and rude in a degree corresponding to the narrow social development of the races who speak them. These races are precisely in that state of imperfect expansion, both civilly and intellectually, under which the separation has not fully taken place between poetry and prose. Their social condition is too simple and elementary to require much cultivation of intellectual topics. Little motive exists for writing, unless on occasions of poetic excitement. The subdued colouring, therefore, of prose has not yet been (to speak physiologically) secreted. And the national diction has the appearance of being more energetic

and sparkling, simply because it is more inflated; the chastities of good taste not having yet been called forth by social necessities to disentangle the separate forms of impassioned and non-impassioned composition. The Kalmuck Tartars, according to a German traveller, viz., Bergmann, long resident amongst them, speak in rapturous terms of their own language; but it is probable that the particular modes of phraseology which fascinate their admiration, are precisely those which a more advanced civilization, and a corresponding development of taste, would reject as spurious. Certainly, in the case of a language and a literature likely to be much in advance of the Kalmuck, viz., the Arabic, at the era of Mahomet, we find this conjecture realized. The Koran is held by the devout Mahommedan to be the most admirable model of composition; but exactly those ornaments of diction or of imagery, which he regards as the jewels of the whole, are most entirely in the childish taste of imperfect civilization. That which attracts the Arab critic or the Persian, is most of all repulsive to the masculine judgment of the European.

Barbarism, in short, through all degrees, generates its own barbarisque standards of taste; and nowhere so much as in the great field of diction and ornamental composition. A high civilisation is an indispensable condition for developing the

full powers of a language; and it is equally a condition for developing the taste which must preside over the appreciation of diction and style. The elder civilisations of Egypt and of Asiatic empires are too imperfectly known at this day to furnish any suggestions upon the subject. The earliest civilisation that offers a practical field of study to our own age is the superb one of Greece.

It cannot be necessary to say that from that memorable centre of intellectual activity have emanated the great models in art and literature, which, to Christendom, when recasting her mediæval forms, became chiefly operative in controlling her luxuriance, and in other negative services, though not so powerful for positive impulse and inspiration. Greece was, in fact, *too* ebullient with intellectual activity—an activity too palestric, and purely human—so that the opposite pole of the mind, which points to the mysterious and the spiritual, was, in the agile Greek, too intensely a child of the earth, starved and palsied; whilst in the Hebrew, dull and inert intellectually, but in his spiritual organs awake and sublime, the case was precisely reversed. Yet, after all, the result was immeasurably in favour of the Hebrew. Speaking in the deep sincerities of the solitary and musing heart, which refuses to be duped by the whistling of names, we must say of the Greek

that—*laudatur et alget*—he has won the admiration of the human race, he is numbered amongst the chief brilliancies of earth, but on the deeper and more abiding nature of man he has no hold. He will perish when any deluge of calamity overtakes the libraries of our planet, or if any great revolution of thought remoulds them, and will be remembered only as a generation of flowers is remembered; with the same tenderness of feeling, and with the same pathetic sense of a natural predestination to evanescence. Whereas the Hebrew, by introducing himself to the secret places of the human heart, and sitting there as incubator over the awful germs of the spiritualities that connect man with the unseen worlds, has perpetuated himself as a power in the human system: he is co-enduring with man's race, and careless of all revolutions in literature or in the composition of society.

The very languages of these two races repeat the same expression of their intellectual differences, and of the differences in their missions. The Hebrew, meagre and sterile as regards the numerical wealth of his ideas, is infinite as regards their power; the Greek, on the other hand, rich as tropic forests, in the polymorphous life, the life of the dividing and distinguishing intellect, is weak only in the supreme region of thought. The Hebrew has scarcely any individuated words. Ask a Hebrew scholar if he has a word for a *ball*

(as a tennis-ball, *pila lusoria*); he says, "O yes." What is it then? Why, he gives you the word for *globe*. Ask for *orb*, for *sphere*, &c., still you have the same answer; the individual circumstantiations are swallowed up in the generic outline. But the Greek has a parity of wealth alike in the abstract and the concrete. Even as *vocal* languages, the Hebrew and the Greek obey the same prevailing law of difference. The Hebrew is a sublime monochord, uttering vague vowel sounds as indistinct and shy as the breathings of an Æolian harp when exposed to a fitful breeze. The Greek is more firmly articulated by consonants, and the succession of its syllables runs through a more extensive compass of sonorous variety than can be matched in any other known language. The Spanish and the Italian, with all the stateliness of their modulation, make no approach to the canorous *variety* of the sounds of the Greek.* Read a passage from almost any Greek poet, and each syllable seems to have been placed

* The Romans discover something apparently of the same tendency to a vague economy of distraction. But in *them* it is merely casual, and dependent on accidental ignorance. Thus, for instance, it is ridiculous to render the Catullian *Passer meæ puellæ* by *sparrow*. As well suppose Lesbia to have fondled a pet hedgehog. *Passer*, or *passerculus*, means *any* little bird whatever. The sternness of the Roman mind disdained to linger upon petty distinctions; or at least until the ages of luxurious refinement had paved the way for intellectual refinements. So again, *malum*, or even *pomum*

in its present position as a relief, and by way of contrast to the syllable which follows and precedes.

Of a language thus and otherwise so divinely endowed, the Greeks had a natural right to be proud. Yet *were* they so? There is no appearance of it: and the reason, no doubt, lay in their insulated position. Having no *intellectual* intercourse with foreign nations, they had virtually no intercourse at all—none which could affect the feelings of the literary class, or generally of those who would be likely to contemplate language as a subject of æsthetic admiration. Each Hellenic author might be compared with others of his compatriot authors, in respect to his management of their common language; but not the language itself compared as to structure or capacities with other languages; since these other languages (one and all) were in any practical sense hardly assumed to exist. In this there was no arrogance. Aliens, as to country and civil polity, being objects of jealousy in the circumstances of

does not mean an apple, but any whatever of the larger spherical or spheroidical fruits. A peach, indeed, was described differentially, as *Malum persicum;* an apricot, had the Romans known it, would have been rendered by *malum apricum*, or *malum apricatum;* but an apple also, had it been mentioned with any stress of opposition or pointed distinction attached to it, would have been described differentially, as *malum vulgare* or *malum domesticum.*

Greece, there could be no reason for abstaining from any designation, however hostile, which might seem appropriate to the relation between the parties. But, in reality, the term *barbarians** seems, for many ages, to have implied nothing either hostile or disrespectful. By a natural *onomatopœia*, the Greeks used the iterated syllables *barbar* to denote that a man was unintelligible in his talk; and, by the word *barbarian* originally, it is probable that no sort of reproach was intended, but simply the fact that the people so called spoke a language not intelligible to Greeks. Latterly, the term seems to have been often used as one of mere convenience for classification, indicating the *non-Hellenes* in opposition to the *Hellenes;* and it was not meant to express any qualities whatever of the aliens—simply they were described as *being* aliens. But in the earliest times it was meant, by the word *barbarians*, to describe them under the idea of men who were ἑτερογλωττοι, men who, speaking in a tongue different from the Grecian, spoke unintelligibly; and at this day it is not impossible that the Chinese mean nothing more by the seemingly offensive term *outside barbarians*. The mis-translations must be many between ourselves and the Chinese; and the pro-

* There is a short note by Gibbon upon this word; but it adds nothing to the suggestions which every thoughtful person will furnish to himself.

bability is, that this reputedly arrogant expression means only "the aliens, or external people, who speak in tongues foreign to China." Arrogant or not arrogant, however, in the mouth of the Greeks, the word *barbarians* included the whole human race not living in Hellas, or in colonies thrown off from Hellas.* Having no temptation or facilities for holding any intellectual intercourse with those who could not communicate through the channel of the Greek language, it followed, that the Greeks had no means or opportunity for comparing their own language with the languages of other nations; and, together with this power of mutual comparison, fell away the call and excitement to vanity upon that particular subject. Greece was in the absolute insulation of the phœnix, the unique of birds, that dies without

* In the later periods of Greek literature, viz., at and after the era of Pericles, when the attention had been long pointed to language, and a more fastidious apprehension had been directed to its slighter shades of difference, the term "*barbarous*" was applied apparently to uncouth dialects of the Greek language itself. Thus in the Ajax of Sophocles, Teucer (though certainly talking Greek) is described as speaking barbarously. Perhaps, however, the expression might bear a different construction. But in elder periods it seems hardly possible that the term *barbarous* could ever have been so used. Sir Edward B. Lytton, in his "Athens," supposes Homer, when describing the Carians by this term, to have meant no more than that they spoke some provincial variety of the Ionic Greek: but, applied to an age of so little refinement as the Homeric, I should scarcely think this interpretation admissible.

having felt a throb of exultation or a pang of jealousy, because it has exposed its gorgeous plumage and the mysterious solemnities of its beauty only to the dusky recesses of Thebaic deserts.

Not thus were the Romans situated. The Greeks, so profound and immovable was their self-conceit, never in any generation came to regard the Romans with the slightest tremour of jealousy, as though they were or ever could be rivals in literature. The Roman nobles, as all Greece knew, resorted in youth to Athens as to the eternal well-head of learning and eloquence; and the literary or the forensic efforts of such persons were never viewed as by possibility efforts of competition with their masters, but simply as graceful expressions of homage to the inimitable, by men whose rank gave a value to this homage. Cicero and other Romans of his day were egregiously duped by their own vanity, when they received as sincere the sycophantic praises of mercenary Greek rhetoricians. No Greek ever in good faith admired a Roman upon intellectual grounds, except indeed as Polybius did, whose admiration was fixed upon the Roman institutions, not upon their literature: though even in *his* day the Roman literature had already put forth a masculine promise, and in Plautus, at least, a promise of *unborrowed* excellence. The Greeks

were wrong: the Romans had some things in their literature which a Greek could neither have rivalled nor even understood. They had a peculiar rhetoric for example, such as Ovid's in the contest for the arms of Achilles—such as Seneca's, which, to this hour, has never been properly examined, and which not only has no parallel in Grecian literature, but which, strangely enough, loses its whole effect and sense when translated into Greek: so entirely is it Roman by incommunicable privilege of genius.

But, if the Greeks did no justice to their Roman pupils, on the other hand, the Roman pupils never ceased to regard the Greeks with veneration, or to acknowledge them for their masters in literature: *they* had a foreign literature before their eyes challenging continual comparison; and this foreign literature was in a language which also challenged comparison with their own. Every Roman of distinction, after Sylla and Marius, understood Greek; often talked it fluently, declaimed in it, and wrote books in it. But there is no language without its own peculiar genius, and therefore none without its separate powers and advantages. That the Latin language has in excess such an original character, and consequently such separate powers, Romans were not slow to discover. Studying the Greek so closely they found by continual collation in what

quarter lay the peculiar strength of the Latin. And, amongst others, Cicero did himself the greatest honour, and almost redeems the baseness of his political conduct, by the patriotic fervour which he now and then exhibits in defending the claims of his native language and native literature. He maintains, also, more than once, and perhaps with good reason, the native superiority of the Roman mind to the Grecian in certain qualities of racy humour, &c.*

Here, viz., in the case of Cicero, we have the first eminent example (though he himself records some elder examples amongst his own countrymen) of a man's standing up manfully to support the pretensions of his mother tongue. And this might be done in a mere spirit of pugnacious defiance to the arrogance of another nation—a spirit which finds matter of quarrel in a straw. But here also we find the first example of a statesman's seriously regarding a language in the light of a foremost jewel amongst the trophies of nationality.

Coming forward to our own times, we find sovereign rulers, on behalf of great nations, occasionally raising disputes which presume some

* Where, by the way, the vocabulary of æsthetic terms, after all the labours of Ernesti and other German editors, is still far from being understood. In particular, the word, *facetus* is so far from answering to its usual interpretation, that *nostro periculo* let the reader understand it as precisely what the French mean by *naïve*.

weak sense of the value and dignity attached to a language. Cromwell, for instance, insisted upon Cardinal Mazarine's surrendering his pretension to have the French language used in a particular negotiation; and accordingly Latin was substituted. But this did not argue in Cromwell any *real* estimation of the English language. He had been weak enough to wish that his own life and annals should be written in Latin rather than in English. The motive, it is true, might be to facilitate the circulation of the work amongst the literati of the Continent. But vernacular translations would more certainly have been executed all over the Continent in the absence of a Latin original; for this, by meeting the demand of foreigners in part (viz., of *learned* foreigners) would *pro tanto* have lessened the motives to such translations. And apart from this preference of a Latin to a domestic portraiture addressing itself originally to his own countrymen, or, if Latin were otherwise the preferable language, apart from Cromwell's preference of a Latin Casaubon to a Latin Milton, in no instance did Cromwell testify any sense of the commanding rank due to English literature amongst the contemporary* literatures of Christendom, nor any concern for its extension.

* At this era, when Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and the contemporary dramatists, when Lord Bacon, Selden, Milton, and many of the leading English theologians (Jewel,

In the case of resisting the French arrogance, Cromwell had seemed to express homage to the language of his country; but in reality he had only regarded the political dignity of his country. A pretension may be lighter than a feather; and yet in behalf of our country we do right to suffer no insolent aggression upon it by an enemy. But this argues no sincere regard for that feather on its own account. We have known a sailor to knock an Italian down for speaking disrespectfully of English tenor voices. The true and appropriate expression of reverence to a language is not by fighting for it, as a subject of national rivalry, but by taking earnest pains to write it with accuracy, practically to display its beauty, and to make its powers available for commensurate ends. Tried by this test, which of the three peoples that walk at the head of civilisa-

Hooker, Chillingworth, and Jeremy Taylor), had appeared—in fact, all the *optimates* of the English literature—it must be remembered that the French literature was barely beginning. Montaigne was the only *deceased* author of eminence; Corneille was the only living author in general credit. The reader may urge that, already, in the times of Catherine de Medici, there were eminent poets. In the reign of her son Charles IX. were several; and in the reign of her husband there was even a celebrated *Pleiad* of poets. But these were merely *court* poets—they had no national name or life; and were already forgotten in the days of Louis XIII. As to German literature, *that* was a blank. Germany had then but one tolerable poet, viz., Opitz, whom some people (chiefly his countrymen) honour with the title of the German Dryden!

tion—French, Germans, or English—have best fulfilled the duties of their position?

To answer, that the French only have been fully awake to these duties is painful, but too manifestly it is true. The French language possesses the very highest degree of merit, though not in the very highest mode of merit; it is the unique language of the planet as an instrument for giving effect to the powers, and for meeting the necessities, of social gaiety and colloquial intercourse. This is partly the effect, and partly the cause, of the social temperament which distinguishes the French: partly follows the national disposition, and partly leads to it. The adaptation of the language to the people, not perhaps more really prominent in this case than in others, is more conspicuously so; and it may be in a spirit of gratitude for this genial co-operation in their language that the French are in a memorable degree anxious to write it with elegance and correctness. They take a pride in doing so; and it is remarkable that grammatical inaccuracies, so common amongst ourselves, and common even amongst our literary people, are almost unknown amongst the educated French.*

* This the reader might be apt to doubt, if he were to judge of French grammar by French orthography. Until recently—that is, through the last thirty years—very few people in France, even of the educated classes, could spell. They spelt by procuration. The compositors of the press

But mere fidelity to grammar would leave a *negative* impression: the respect which the French show to their language expresses itself chiefly in their way of managing it, that is, in their attention to style and diction. It is the rarest thing possible to find a French writer erring by sentences too long, too intricate, and loaded with clauses, or too clumsy in their structure. The very highest qualities of style are not much within the ideal of French composition; but in the executive results, French prose composition usually reveals an air of finish, of self-restraint under any possible temptation to *des longueurs*, and of graceful adroitness in the transitions.

Precisely the reverse of all this is found in the compositions of the German, who is the greatest

held a general power-of-attorney to spell for universal France. A *fac-simile* of the spelling which prevailed amongst the royal family of France at the time of the elder Revolution, is given in Cléry's Journal: it is terrific. Such forms occur, for instance, as *J'avoient* (J'avois) for *I had: J'été* (étois) for *I was.* But, in publishing such facts, the reader is not to imagine that Cléry meant to expose anything needing concealment. All people of distinction spelled in that lawless way; and the loyal valet doubtless no more thought it decorous for a man of rank to spell his own spelling, than to clean his own shoes or to to wash his own linen. "Base is the man that pays," says Ancient Pistol; "Base is the man that spells," said the French of that century. It would have been vulgar to spell decently; and it was not illiterate to spell abominably; for literary men spelled not at all better; they also spelled by proxy, and by grace of compositors.

nuisance, in what concerns the treatment of language, that the mind of man is capable of conceiving. Of his language, the German is proud, and with reason, for it is redundantly rich. Even in its Teutonic section, it is *so* rich as to be self-sufficing, and capable, though awkwardly, of dispensing with the Greek and Latin counter-section. This independence of alien resources has sometimes been even practically adopted as the basis of a dictionary, and officially patronized by adoption in the public *bureaus*. Some thirty years ago, the Prussian government was said to have introduced into the public service a dictionary* which rejected all words not purely vernacular. Such a word, for instance, as *philosophie* was not admissible; the indigenous word *weltweisheit* was held to be not only sufficient, which it really *is*, but exclusively legitimate. Yet, with all this scrupulosity and purism of veneration for his native language, to which he ascribes *every* quality of power and beauty, and amongst others —*credite posteri!*—sometimes even *vocal* beauty†

* By Heinze, if I recollect; and founded partly on that of Wolff.

† Foreigners do not often go so far as this; and yet an American, in his "Sketches of Turkey" (New York, 1833), characterizes the German (p. 478) not only as a soft and melodious language, but absolutely as "the *softest* of all European languages." Schiller and Goethe had a notion that it was capable of being hammered into euphony, that it

and euphony, the true German has no sense of grace or deformity in the management of his language. Style, diction, the construction of sentences, are ideas perfectly without meaning to the German writer. If a whole book were made up of a single sentence, all collateral or subordinate ideas being packed into it as parenthetical intercalations—if this single sentence should even cover an acre of ground, the true German would see in all *that* no want of art, would recognise no opportunities thrown away for the display of beauty. The temple would in *his* eyes exist, because the materials of the temple—the stone, the lime, the iron, the timber—had been carted to the ground. A sentence, even when insulated and viewed apart for itself, is a subject for complex art: even *so* far it is capable of multiform beauty, and liable to a whole *nosology* of malconformations. But it is in the *relation* of sentences, in what Horace terms their "*junctura*," that the true life of composition resides. The mode of their *nexus*, the way in which one sentence is made to arise out of another, and to prepare the opening for a third: this is the great loom in which the textile process of the moving intellect reveals itself and prospers. Here the separate

was by possibility malleable in that respect, but then only by great labour of selection, and as a trick of rope-dancing ingenuity.

clauses of a period become architectural parts, aiding, relieving, supporting each other. But how can any approach to that effect, or any suggestion of it exist for him who hides and buries all openings for parts and graceful correspondences in one monotonous continuity of period, stretching over three octavo pages? Kant was a great man; but he was obtuse and deaf as an antediluvian boulder with regard to language and its capacities. He has sentences which have been measured by a carpenter, and some of them run two feet eight by six inches. Now, a sentence with that enormous span is fit only for the use of a megatherium or a pre-Adamite. Parts so remote as the beginning and the end of such a sentence can have no sensible relation to each other; not much as regards their logic, but none at all as regards their more *sensuous* qualities—rhythmus, for instance, or the continuity of metaphor. And it is clear that, if the internal relations of a sentence fade under the extravagant misproportion of its scale, *à fortiori* must the outer relations. If two figures, or other objects, are meant to modify each other visually by means of colour, of outline, or of expression, they must be brought into juxtaposition, or at least into neighbourhood. A chasm between them, so vast as to prevent the synthesis of the two objects in one co-existing field of vision interrupts the play

of all genial comparison. Periods and clauses of periods, modify each other, and build up a whole, then only when the parts are shown *as* parts, cohering and conspiring to a common result. But if each part is separately so vast as to eclipse the disc of the adjacent parts, then substantially they are separate wholes, and do not coalesce to any joint or complex impression.

We English in this matter occupy a middle position between the French and the Germans. Agreeably to the general cast of the national character, our tendency is to degrade the value of the ornamental, whenever it is brought before us under any suggestion of comparison or rivalry with the substantial or grossly useful. Viewing the thoughts as the substantial objects in a book, we are apt to regard the manner of presenting these thoughts as a secondary or even trivial concern. The one we typify as the metallic substance, the silver or gold, which constitutes the true value, that cannot perish in a service of plate; whereas the style too generally, in *our* estimate, represents the mere casual fashion given to the plate by the artist—an adjunct that any change of public taste may degrade into a positive disadvantage. But in this we English err greatly; and by these three capital oversights:—

1. It is certain that style, or (to speak by the most general expression) the management of

language, ranks amongst the fine arts, and is able therefore to yield a separate intellectual pleasure quite apart from the interest of the subject treated. So far it is already one error to rate the value of style as if it were necessarily a secondary or subordinate thing. On the contrary, style has an *absolute* value, like the product of any other exquisite art, quite distinct from the value of the subject about which it is employed, and irrelatively to the subject; precisely as the fine workmanship of Scopas the Greek, or of Cellini the Florentine, is equally valued by the connoisseur, whether embodied in bronze or marble, in an ivory or a golden vase. But—

2. If we *do* submit to this narrow valuation of style, founded on the interest of the subject to which it is ministerial, still, even on that basis, we English commit a capital blunder, which the French earnestly and sincerely escape; for assuming that the thoughts involve the primary interest, still it must make all the difference in the world to the success of those thoughts, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to expel the doubts or darkness that may have settled upon them; and, secondly, in cases where the business is, not to establish new convictions, but to carry old convictions into operative life and power, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to rekindle in the mind a practical sense of their value.

Style has two separate functions—first, to brighten the *intelligibility* of a subject which is obscure to the understanding; secondly, to regenerate the normal *power* and impressiveness of a subject which has become dormant to the sensibilities. Darkness gathers upon many a theme, sometimes from previous mistreatment, but oftener from original perplexities investing its very nature. Upon the style it is, if we take that word in its largest sense —upon the skill and art of the developer, that these perplexities greatly depend for their illumination. Look, again, at the other class of cases, when the difficulties are not for the understanding, but for the practical sensibilities as applicable to the services of life. The subject, suppose, is already understood sufficiently; but it is lifeless as a motive. It is not new light that is to be communicated, but old torpor that is to be dispersed. The writer is not summoned to convince, but to persuade. Decaying lineaments are to be retraced, and faded colouring to be refreshed. Now, these offices of style are really not essentially below the level of those other offices attached to the original *discovery* of truth. He that to an old conviction, long since inoperative and dead, gives the regeneration that carries it back into the heart as a vital power of action—he, again, that by new light, or by light trained to flow through a new channel, reconciles to the understanding a

truth which hitherto had seemed dark or doubtful—both these men are really, *quoad* us that benefit by their services, the *discoverers* of the truth. Yet these results are amongst the possible gifts of style. Light to *see* the road, power to *advance* along it—such being amongst the promises and proper functions of style, it is a capital error, under the idea of its ministeriality, to undervalue this great organ of the advancing intellect—an organ which is equally important considered as a tool for the culture and *popularization* of truth, and also (if it had no use at all in that way) as a mode *per se* of the beautiful, and a fountain of intellectual pleasure. The vice of that appreciation which we English apply to style, lies in representing it as a mere ornamental accident of written composition—a trivial embellishment, like the mouldings of furniture, the cornices of ceilings, or the arabesques of tea-urns. On the contrary, it is a product of art the rarest, subtlest, and most intellectual; and, like other products of the fine arts, it is then finest when it is most eminently disinterested—that is, most conspicuously detached from gross palpable uses. Yet, in very many cases, it really *has* the obvious uses of that gross palpable order; as in the cases just noticed, when it gives light to the understanding, or power to the will, removing obscurities from one set of truths, and into another circulating the life-

blood of sensibility. In these cases, meantime, the style is contemplated as a thing separable from the thoughts; in fact, as the *dress* of the thoughts — a robe that may be laid aside at pleasure. But

3. There arises a case entirely different, where style cannot be regarded as a *dress* or alien covering, but where style becomes the *incarnation* of the thoughts. The human body is not the dress or apparel of the human spirit; far more mysterious is the mode of their union. Call the two elements A and B; then it is impossible to point out A as existing aloof from B, or *vice versa*. A exists in and through B; B exists in and through A. No profound observer can have failed to observe this illustrated in the capacities of style. Imagery is sometimes not the mere alien apparelling of a thought, and of a nature to be detached from the thought; but is the co-efficient that, being superadded to something else, absolutely *makes* the thought as a *third* and separate existence.

In this third case, our English tendency to undervalue style goes more deeply into error than in the other two. In these two we simply underrate the enormous services that are or might be rendered by style to the interests of truth and human thinking; but, in the third case, we go near to abolish a mode of existence. This is not so impossible an offence as might be supposed.

There are many ideas in Leibnitz, in Kant, in the schoolmen, in Plato at times, and certainly in Aristotle (as the ideas of antiperistasis, entelecheia, &c.), which are only to be arrested and realized by a signal *effort*—by a struggle and a *nisus* both of reflection and of large combination. Now, where so much depends upon an effort—on a spasmodic strain—to fail by a hair's breadth is to collapse. For instance, the idea involved in the word transcendental,* as used in the critical philosophy

* "*Transcendental.*"—Kant, who was the most sincere, honourable, and truthful of human beings, always understood himself. He hated tricks, disguises, or mystifications, simulation equally with dissimulation; and his love of the English was built avowedly on their *veracity*. So far he has an extra chance of intelligibility. On the other hand, of all men, he had the least talent for explaining himself, or communicating his views to others. Whenever Kant undertakes to render into popular language the secrets of metaphysics, one inevitably thinks of Bardolph's attempt to analyse and justify the word *accommodation*:—"*Accommodation*—that is, when a man is (as they say) accommodated; or when a man is being whereby he may be thought to be accommodated, which is an excellent thing." There are sometimes Eleusinian mysteries, sealed by nature herself, the mighty mother, as *aporreta*, things essentially ineffable and unutterable in vulgar ears. Long, for instance, he laboured, but vainly he laboured, to render intelligible the scholastic idea of the transcendental. This should have been easy to deal with; for on the one side lay the *transcendent*, on the other the *immanent*, two buoys to map out the channel; and yet did Kant, throughout his long life, fail to satisfy any one man who was not previously and independently in possession of the idea. Difficulties of this nature should seem as little related to artifice of style and

of Kant, illustrates the metaphysical relations of style.

diction as geometrical difficulties; and yet it is certain that, by throwing the stress and emphasis of the perplexity upon the exact verbal *nodus* of the problem, a better structure of his sentences would have guided Kant to a readier apprehension of the real shape which the difficulty assumed to the ordinary student.

# STYLE.

# STYLE.

AMONGST the never-ending arguments for thankfulness in the privilege of a British birth —arguments more solemn even than numerous, and telling more when weighed than when counted, *pondere quàm numero*—three aspects there are of our national character which trouble the uniformity of our feelings. A good son, even in such a case, is not at liberty to describe himself as "ashamed." Some gentler word must be found to express the character of his distress. And, whatever grounds of blame may appear against his venerated mother, it is one of his filial duties to suppose—either that the blame applies but partially, or, if it should seem painfully universal, that it is one of those excesses to which energetic natures are liable, through the very strength of their constitutional characteristics. Such things do happen. It is certain, for instance, that to the deep sincerity of British nature, and to that shyness or principle of reserve which is inseparable from self-respect, must be traced philosophically the churlishness and un-

conciliatory bearing, for which we are often and angrily arraigned by the smooth south of Europe. That facile obsequiousness, which attracts the inconsiderate in Belgians, Frenchmen, and Italians, is too generally a mixed product from impudence and insincerity. Want of principle and want of moral sensibility compose the original *fundus* of southern manners; and the natural product, in a specious hollowness of demeanour, has been afterwards propagated by imitation through innumerable people, who may have partaken less deeply, or not at all, in the original moral qualities that have moulded such a manner.

Great faults, therefore—such is my inference—may grow out of great virtues in excess. And this consideration should make us cautious even towards an enemy; much more when approaching so holy a question as the merits of our maternal land. Else, and supposing that a strange nation had been concerned in our judgment, we should declare ourselves mortified and humiliated by three expressions of the British character, too public to have escaped the notice of Europe. First, we writhe with shame when we hear of semi-delirious lords and ladies, sometimes theatrically costumed in caftans and turbans—Lord Byrons, for instance, and Lady Hester Stanhopes—proclaiming to the whole world, as the law of their households, that all nations and languages

are free to enter their gates, with one sole exception directed against their British compatriots; that is to say, abjuring by sound of trumpet the very land through which only they themselves have risen into consideration; spurning those for countrymen "without whom" (as M. Gourville had the boldness to tell Charles II), "without whom, by G—, sir, you yourself are nothing." We all know who *they* are that have done this thing: we *may* know, if we inquire, how many conceited coxcombs are at this moment acting upon that precedent; in which, we scruple not to avow, are contained funds for everlasting satire, more crying than any which Juvenal found in the worst days of Rome. And we may ask calmly, Would not death, judicial death, have visited such an act amongst the ancient republics? Next, but with that indulgence which belongs to an infirmity rather than an error of the will, we feel ashamed for the obstinate obtuseness of our country in regard to one and the most effective of the Fine Arts. It will be understood that we speak of music. In painting and in sculpture it is now past disputing, that if we are destined to inferiority at all, it is an inferiority only to the Italians of the fifteenth century, an inferiority which, if it were even sure to be permanent, we share with all the other malicious nations around us. On that head we are safe. And in the

most majestic of the Fine Arts, in poetry, we have a clear and vast pre-eminence as regards all nations; no nation but ourselves has equally succeeded in both forms of the higher poetry, epic and tragic. Whilst of meditative or philosophic poetry (Young's, Cowper's, Wordsworth's)—to say nothing of lyric—we may affirm what Quinctilian says justly of Roman satire—"*tota quidem nostra est.*" If, therefore, in every mode of composition through which the impassioned mind speaks, a nation has excelled its rivals, we cannot be allowed to suppose any general defect of sensibility as a cause of obtuseness with regard to music. So little, however, is the grandeur of this Divine art suspected amongst us generally, that a man will write an essay deliberately for the purpose of putting on record his own preference of a song to the most elaborate music of Mozart: he will glory in his shame, and, though speaking in the character of one seemingly confessing to a weakness, will evidently view himself in the light of a candid man, laying bare a state of feeling which is natural and sound, opposed to a class of false pretenders who, whilst servile to rules of artists, in reality contradict their own musical instincts, and feel little or nothing of what they profess. Strange that even the analogy of other arts should not open his eyes to the delusión he is encouraging! A song, an air, a tune; that is, a

short succession of notes revolving rapidly upon itself, how could that, by possibility, offer a field of compass sufficient for the development of great musical effects? The preparation pregnant with the future, the remote correspondence, the questions, as it were, which to a deep musical sense are asked in one passage and answered in another; the iteration and ingemination of a given effect, moving through subtle variations that sometimes disguise the theme, sometimes fitfully reveal it, sometimes throw it out tumultuously to the blaze of daylight,—these and ten thousand forms of self-conflicting musical passion, what room could they find, what opening, what utterance in so limited a field as an air or song? A hunting-box, a park-lodge, may have a forest grace and the beauty of appropriateness; but what if a man should match such a bauble against the Pantheon, or against the minsters of York and Cologne? A repartee may by accident be practically effective: it has been known to crush a party scheme, and an oration of Cicero's or of Burke's could have done no more; but what judgment would match the two against each other as developments of power? Let him who finds the *maximum* of his musical gratification in a song, be assured, by that one fact, that his sensibility is rude and undeveloped. Yet exactly upon this level is the ordinary state of musical feeling throughout

Great Britain; and the howling wilderness of the psalmody in most parish churches of the land, countersigns the statement. There is, however, accumulated in London more musical science than in any capital in the world. This, gradually diffused, will improve the feeling of the country. And, if it should fail to do so, in the worst case we have the satisfaction of knowing, through Jean Jacques Rousseau, and by later evidences, that, sink as we may below Italy and Germany in the sensibility to this Divine art, we cannot go lower than France. Here, however, and in this cherished obtuseness as regards a pleasure so important for human life, and at the head of the physico-intellectual pleasures, we find a second reason for quarrelling with the civilisation of our country. At the summit of civilisation in other points, she is here yet uncultivated and savage.

A third point is larger. Here (properly speaking) our quarrel is co-extensive with that general principle in England, which tends in all things to set the matter above the manner, the substance above the external show; a principle noble in itself, but inevitably wrong wherever the manner blends inseparably with the substance.

This general tendency operates in many ways: but our own immediate purpose is concerned with it only so far as it operates upon style. In no country upon earth, were it possible to carry such

a maxim into practical effect, is it a more determinate tendency of the national mind to value the *matter* of a book, not only as paramount to the *manner*, but even as distinct from it, and as capable of a separate insulation. What first gave a shock to such a tendency, must have been the unwilling and mysterious sense that, in some cases, the matter and the manner were so inextricably interwoven, as not to admit of this coarse bisection. The one was embedded, entangled, and interfused through the other, in a way which bade defiance to such gross mechanical separations. But the tendency to view the two elements as in a separate relation still predominates; and, as a consequence, the tendency to undervalue the accomplishment of style. Do we mean that the English, as a literary nation, are practically less sensible of the effects of a beautiful style? Not at all. Nobody can be insensible to these effects. And, upon a known fact of history, viz., the *exclusive* cultivation of popular oratory in England, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we might presume a peculiar and exalted sense of style amongst ourselves. Until the French Revolution, no nation of Christendom except England had any practical experience of popular rhetoric; any deliberative eloquence, for instance; any forensic eloquence that was made public; any democratic eloquence of the hustings; or any

form whatever of public rhetoric beyond that of the pulpit. Through two centuries at least, no nation could have been so constantly reminded of the powers for good and evil which belong to style. Often it must have happened, to the mortification or joy of multitudes, that one man out of windy nothings has constructed an overwhelming appeal to the passions of his hearers, whilst another has thrown away the weightiest cause by his manner of treating it. Neither let it be said, that this might not arise from differences of style, but because the triumphant demagogue made use of fictions, and, therefore, that his triumph was still obtained by means of his matter, however hollow that matter might have proved upon investigation. That case, also, is a possible case; but often enough two orators have relied upon the same identical matter—the facts, for instance, of the slave-trade—and one has turned this to such good account by his arrangements, by his modes of vivifying dry statements, by his arts of illustration, by his science of connecting things with human feeling, that he has left his hearers in convulsions of passion; whilst the other shall have used every tittle of the same matter without eliciting one scintillation of sympathy, without leaving behind one distinct impression in the memory or planting one murmur in the heart.

In proportion, therefore, as the English people

have been placed for two centuries and a quarter (*i.e.*, since the latter decennium of James the First's reign), under a constant experience of popular eloquence thrown into all channels of social life, they must have had peculiar occasion to feel the effects of style. But to feel is not to feel consciously. Many a man is charmed by one cause who ascribes the effect to another. Many a man is fascinated by the artifices of composition, who fancies that it is the subject which has operated so potently. And even for the subtlest of philosophers who keeps in mind the interpenetration of the style and the matter, it would be as difficult to distribute the true proportions of their joint action, as, with regard to the earliest rays of the dawn, it would be to say how much of the beauty lay in the heavenly light which chased away the darkness—how much in the rosy colour which that light entangled.

Easily, therefore, it may have happened, that, under the constant action and practical effects of a style, a nation may have failed to notice the cause *as* the cause. And, besides the disturbing forces which mislead the judgment of the auditor in such a case, there are other disturbing forces which modify the practice of the speaker. That is good rhetoric for the hustings which is bad for a book. Even for the highest forms of popular eloquence, the laws of style vary much from the

general standard. In the senate, and for the same reason in a newspaper, it is a virtue to reiterate your meaning: tautology becomes a merit: variation of the words, with a substantial identity of the sense and dilution of the truth, is oftentimes a necessity. A man who should content himself with a single condensed enunciation of a perplexed doctrine, would be a madman and a *felo-de-se*, as respected his reliance upon that doctrine. Like boys who are throwing the sun's rays into the eyes of a mob by means of a mirror, you must shift your lights and vibrate your reflections at every possible angle, if you would agitate the popular mind extensively. Every mode of intellectual communication has its separate strength and separate weakness; its peculiar embarrassments, compensated by peculiar resources. It is the advantage of a book, that you can return to the past page if anything in the present depends upon it. But, return being impossible in the case of a spoken harangue, where each sentence perishes as it is born, both the speaker and the hearer become aware of a mutual interest in a much looser style, and a perpetual dispensation from the severities of abstract discussion. It is for the benefit of both, that the weightier propositions should be detained before the eye a good deal longer than the chastity of taste or the austerity of logic would tolerate in a book. Time

must be given for the intellect to eddy about a truth, and to appropriate its bearings. There is a sort of previous lubrication; such as the boa-constrictor applies to any subject of digestion, which is requisite to familiarize the mind with a startling or a complex novelty. And this is obtained for the intellect by varying the modes of presenting it,—now putting it directly before the eye, now obliquely, now in an abstract shape, now in the concrete; all which being the proper technical discipline for dealing with such cases, ought no longer to be viewed as a licentious mode of style, but as the just style in respect of those licentious circumstances. And the true art for such popular display is to contrive the best forms for appearing to say something new, when in reality you are but echoing yourself; to break up massy chords into running variations; and to mask, by slight differences in the manner, a virtual identity in the substance.

We have been illustrating a twofold neutralizing effect applied to the advantages, otherwise enjoyed by the English people, for appreciating the forms of style. What was it that made the populace of Athens and of Rome so sensible to the force of rhetoric and to the magic of language? It was the habit of hearing these two great engines daily worked for purposes interesting to themselves as citizens, and sufficiently

intelligible to command their willing attention. The English, amongst modern nations, have had the same advantages, allowance being made for the much less intense concentration of the audience. In the ancient republics, it was always the same city; and, therefore, the same audience, except in so far as it was spread through many generations. This has been otherwise in England: and yet, by newspaper reports, any great effects in one assize town, or electoral town, has been propagated to the rest of the empire, through the eighteenth and the present century. But all this, and the continual exemplification of style as a great agency for democratic effect, have not availed to win a sufficient *practical* respect, in England, for the arts of composition as essential to authorship. And the reason is, because, in the first place, from the intertexture of style and matter, from the *impossibility that the one should affect them otherwise than in connexion with the other*, it has been natural for an audience to charge on the superior agent what often belonged to the lower. This in the first place; and, secondly, because *the modes of style appropriate to popular eloquence being essentially different from those of written composition*, any possible experience on the hustings, or in the senate, would *pro tanto* tend rather to disqualify the mind for appreciating the more chaste and more elaborate

qualities of style fitted for books; and thus a real advantage of the English in one direction has been neutralized by two causes in another.

Generally and ultimately, it is certain that our British disregard or inadequate appreciation of style, though a very lamentable fault, has had its origin in the manliness of the British character; in the sincerity and directness of the British taste; in the principle of "*esse quam videri*," which might be taken as the key to much in our manner, much in the philosophy of our lives; and finally, has had some part of its origin in that same love for the practical and the tangible which has so memorably governed the course of our higher speculations from Bacon to Newton. But whatever may have been the origin of this most faulty habit, whatever mixed causes now support it, beyond all question it is that such a habit of disregard or of slight regard applied to all the arts of composition does exist in the most painful extent, and is detected by a practised eye in every page of almost every book that is published.

If you could look anywhere with a right to expect continual illustrations of what is good in the manifold qualities of style, it should reasonably be amongst our professional authors; but as a body, they are distinguished by the most absolute carelessness in this respect. Whether in the

choice of words and idioms, or in the construction of their sentences, it is not possible to conceive the principle of lazy indifference carried to a more revolting extremity. Proof lies before you, spread out upon every page, that no excess of awkwardness, or of inelegance, or of unrhythmical cadence, is so rated in the tariff of faults as to balance in the writer's estimate the trouble of remoulding a clause, of interpolating a phrase, or even of striking the pen through a superfluous word. In our own experience it has happened, that we have known an author so laudably fastidious in this subtle art, as to have recast one chapter of a series no less than seventeen times; so difficult was the ideal or model of excellence which he kept before his mind; so indefatigable was his labour for mounting to the level of that ideal. Whereas, on the other hand, with regard to a large majority of the writers now carrying forward the literature of the country from the last generation to the next, the evidence is perpetual; not so much that they rest satisfied with their own random preconceptions of each clause or sentence, as that they never trouble themselves to form any such preconceptions. Whatever words tumble out under the blindest accidents of the moment, those are the words retained; whatever sweep is impressed by chance upon the motion of a period, that is the arrangement

ratified. To fancy that men thus determinately careless as to the grosser elements of style would pause to survey distant proportions, or to adjust any more delicate symmetries of good composition, would be visionary. As to the links of connexion, the transitions, and the many other functions of logic in good writing, things are come to such a pass, that what was held true of Rome in two separate ages by two great rhetoricians, and of Constantinople in an age long posterior, may now be affirmed of England—the idiom of our language, the mother tongue, survives only amongst our women and children; not, Heaven knows, amongst our women who write books—they are often painfully conspicuous for all that disfigures authorship—but amongst well-educated women not professionally given to literature. Cicero and Quintilian, each for his own generation, ascribed something of the same pre-eminence to the noble matrons of Rome; and more than one writer of the lower empire has recorded of Byzantium, that in the nurseries of that city was found the last home for the purity of the ancient Greek. No doubt it might have been found also amongst the innumerable mob of that haughty metropolis, but stained with corruptions and vulgar abbreviations; or, wherever it might lurk, assuredly it was not amongst the noble, the officials, or the courtiers, else it was

impossible that such a master of affectation as Nicetas Choniates, for instance, should have found toleration. But the rationale of this matter lies in a small compass: why are the local names, whenever they have resulted from the general good sense of a country, faithful to the local truth, grave, and unaffected? Simply because they are not inventions of any active faculty, but mere passive depositions from a real impression upon the mind. On the other hand, wherever there is an ambitious principle set in motion for name-inventing, there it is sure to terminate in something monstrous and fanciful. Women offend in such cases even more than men, because more of sentiment or romance will mingle with the names they impose. Sailors again err in an opposite spirit; there is no affectation in their names, but there is too painful an effort after ludicrous allusions to the gravities of their native land—"Big Wig Island," or "the Bishop and his Clerks"—or the name becomes a memento of real incidents, but too casual and personal to merit this lasting record of a name, such as *Point Farewell*, or *Cape Turn-again*. This fault applies to many of the Yankee* names, and to many more

* "*Yankee names*:"—Foreigners in America subject themselves to a perpetual misinterpretation, by misapplying this term. "*Yankee*," in the American use, does not mean a citizen of the United States as opposed to a foreigner, but a

in the southern and western States of North America, where the earliest population has usually been of a less religious character, and most of all it applies to the names of the back settlements. These people live under influences the most opposite to those of false refinement: coarse necessities, elementary features of peril or embarrassment, primary aspects of savage nature, compose the scenery of their thoughts, and these are reflected by their names. *Dismal Swamp* expresses a condition of unreclaimed nature, which must disappear with growing civilisation. *Big Bone Lick* tells a tale of cruelty that cannot often be repeated. Buffaloes, like all cattle, derive medicinal benefit from salt; they come in droves for a thousand miles to lick the masses of rock salt. The new settlers observing this, lie in ambush to surprise them: 25,000 noble animals in one instance were massacred for their hides. In the following year the usual crowds advanced, but the first who snuffed the tainted air wheeled round, bellowed, and "recoiled" far into his native woods. Meantime the large bones remain to attest the extent of the merciless massacre. Here, as in all cases, there is a truth expressed, but again too casual and special. Besides that, from contempt of elegance, or from defect of art,

citizen of the Northern New England States (Massachusetts, Connecticut, &c.) opposed to a Virginian, a Kentuckian, &c.

the names resemble the seafaring nomenclature in being too rudely compounded.

As with the imposition of names, so with the use of the existing language, most classes stand between the pressure of two extremes—of coarseness, of carelessness, of imperfect art on the one hand; of spurious refinement and fantastic ambition upon the other. Authors have always been a dangerous class for any language. Amongst the myriads who are prompted to authorship by the coarse love of reputation, or by the nobler craving for sympathy, there will always be thousands seeking distinction through novelties of diction. Hopeless of any audience through mere weight of matter, they will turn for their last resource to such tricks of innovation as they can bring to bear upon language. What care they for purity or simplicity of diction, if at any cost of either they can win a special attention to themselves? Now, the great body of women are under no such unhappy bias. If they happen to move in polished circles, or have received a tolerable education, they will speak their native language of necessity with truth and simplicity. And supposing them not to be professional writers (as so small a proportion *can* be, even in France or England), there is always something in the situation of women which secures a fidelity to the idiom. From the greater excitability of females,

and the superior vivacity of their feelings, they will be liable to far more irritations from wounded sensibilities. It is for such occasions chiefly that they seek to be effective in their language. Now, there is not in the world so certain a guarantee for pure idiomatic diction, without tricks or affectation, as a case of genuine excitement. Real situations are always pledges of a real natural language. It is in counterfeit passion, in the mimical situations of novels, or in poems that are efforts of ingenuity, and no ebullitions of absolute unsimulated feeling, that female writers endeavour to sustain their own jaded sensibility, or to reinforce the languishing interest of their readers by extravagances of language. No woman in this world, under a movement of resentment from a false accusation, or from jealousy, or from confidence betrayed, ever was at leisure to practise vagaries of caprice in the management of her mother tongue: strength of real feeling shuts out all temptation to the affectation of false feeling.

Hence the purity of the female Byzantine Greek. Such caprices as they might have, took some other course, and found some other vent than through their mother tongue. Hence, also, the purity of female English. Would you desire at this day to read our noble language in its native beauty, picturesque from idiomatic propriety, racy in its phraseology, delicate yet sinewy in its com-

position, steal the mail-bags, and break open all the letters in female handwriting. Three out of four will been written by that class of women who have the most leisure and the most interest in a correspondence by the post; that class who combine more of intelligence, cultivation, and of thoughtfulness, than any other in Europe—the class of unmarried women above twenty-five—an increasing class;* women who, from mere dignity of character, have renounced all prospects of conjugal and parental life, rather than descend into habits unsuitable to their birth. Women capable of such sacrifices, and marked by such strength of mind, may be expected to think with deep feeling, and to express themselves (unless where they have been too much biassed by bookish connexions) with natural grace. Not impossibly these same women, if required to come forward in some public character, might write ill and affectedly. They would then have their free natural movement of thought distorted into some accommodation to artificial standards, amongst which they might happen to select a bad one for imitation.

* "*An increasing class:*" But not in France. It is a most remarkable moral phenomenon in the social condition of that nation, and one which speaks a volume as to the lower tone of female dignity, that unmarried women, at the age which amongst us obtains the insulting name of *old maids*, are almost unknown. What shocking sacrifices of sexual honour does this one fact argue?

But in their letters they write under the benefit of their natural advantages; not warped, on the one hand, into that constraint or awkwardness which is the inevitable effect of conscious exposure to public gaze; yet, on the other, not left to vacancy or the chills of apathy, but sustained by some deep sympathy between themselves and their correspondents.

So far as concerns idiomatic English, we are satisfied, from the many beautiful female letters which we have heard upon chance occasions from every quarter of the empire, that they, the educated women of Great Britain—above all, the interesting class of women unmarried upon scruples of sexual honour—and also (as in Constantinople of old) the nurseries of Great Britain, are the true and best depositaries of the old mother idiom. But we must not forget, though this is another term for what is good in English, when we are talking of a human..and a popular interest, there is a separate use of the language, as in the higher forms of history or philosophy, which ought *not* to be idiomatic. As respects that which *is*, it is remarkable that the same orders cling to the ancient purity of diction amongst ourselves who did so in pagan Rome; viz., *women*, for the reasons just noticed, *and people of rank*. So much has this been the tendency in England, that we know a person of

great powers, but who has in all things a one-sided taste, and is so much a lover of idiomatic English as to endure none else, who professes to read no writer since Lord Chesterfield. It is certain that this accomplished nobleman, who has been most unjustly treated, from his unfortunate collision with a national favourite, and in part also from the laxity of his moral principles, where, however, he spoke worse than he thought, wrote with the ease and careless grace of a high-bred gentleman. But his style is not peculiar: it has always been the style of his order. After making the proper allowance for the continual new infusions into our peerage from the bookish class of lawyers, and for some modifications derived from the learned class of spiritual peers, the tone of Lord Chesterfield has always been the tone of our old aristocracy; a tone of elegance and propriety, above all things free from the stiffness of pedantry or academic rigour, and obeying Cæsar's rule of shunning *tanquam scopulum* any *insolens verbum*. It is, indeed, through this channel that the solicitudes of our British nobility have always flowed: other qualities might come and go according to the temperament of the individual; but what in all generations constituted an object of horror for that class, was bookish precision and professional peculiarity. From the free popular form of our great public schools, to which nine out of ten

amongst our old nobility resorted, it happened unavoidably that they were not equally clear of popular vulgarities; indeed, from another cause, *that* could not have been avoided: for it is remarkable that a connexion, as close as through an umbilical cord, has always been maintained between the very highest orders of our aristocracy and the lowest of our democracy, by means of nurses. The nurses and immediate personal attendants of all classes come from the same sources, most commonly from the peasantry of the land; they import into all families alike, into the highest and lowest, the coarsest expressions from the vernacular language of anger and contempt. Whence, for example, it was that about five or six years ago, when a new novel circulated in London, with a private understanding that it was a juvenile effort from two very young ladies, daughters of a ducal house, nobody who reflected at all could feel much surprise that one of the characters should express her self-esteem by the popular phrase, that she did not "think small beer of herself." Naturally papa, the duke, had not so much modified the diction of the two young ladies as Nurse Bridget. Equally in its faults and its merits, the language of high life has always tended to simplicity and the vernacular ideal, recoiling from every mode of bookishness. And in this, as in so many other instances, it is

singular to note the close resemblance between polished England and polished Rome. Augustus Cæsar was so little able to enter into any artificial forms or tortuous obscurities of ambitious rhetoric, that he could not so much as understand them. Even the old antique forms of language, where it happened that they had become obsolete, were to him disgusting. Indeed, as regarded the choice and colouring of diction, Augustus was much of a blockhead: a truth which we utter boldly, now that none of his thirty legions can get at us. And probably the main bond of connexion between himself and Horace was their common and excessive hatred of obscurity; from which quality, indeed, the very intellectual defects of both, equally with their good taste, alienated them to intensity.

The pure racy idiom of colloquial or household English, we have insisted, must be looked for in the circles of well-educated women not too closely connected with books. It is certain that books, in any language, will tend to encourage a diction too remote from the style of spoken idiom; whilst the greater solemnity, and the mere ceremonial costume of regular literature must often demand such a non-idiomatic diction, upon mere principles of good taste. But why is it that in our day literature has taken so determinate a swing towards this professional language of books, as to

justify some fears that the other extreme of the free colloquial idiom will perish as a living dialect? The apparent cause lies in the phenomenon of modern life, which on other accounts also is entitled to anxious consideration. It is in newspapers that we must look for the main reading of this generation; and in newspapers, therefore, we must seek for the causes operating upon the style of the age. Seventy years ago this tendency in political journals to usurp upon the practice of books, and to mould the style of writers, was noticed by a most acute observer, himself one of the most brilliant writers in the class of satiric sketchers and personal historians that any nation has produced. Already, before 1770, the late Lord Orford, then simply Horace Walpole, was in the habit of saying to any man who consulted him on the cultivation of style,—"Style is it that you want? Oh, go and look into the newspapers for a style." This was said half contemptuously and half seriously. But the evil has now become overwhelming. One single number of a London morning paper, which in half a century has expanded from the size of a dinner napkin to that of a breakfast tablecloth, from that to a carpet, and will soon be forced, by the expansions of public business, into something resembling the mainsail of a frigate, already is equal in printed matter to a very large octavo

volume. Every old woman in the nation now reads daily a vast miscellany in one volume royal octavo. The evil of this, as regards the quality of knowledge communicated, admits of no remedy. Public business, in its whole unwieldy compass, must always form the subject of these daily chronicles. Nor is there much room to expect any change in the style. The evil effect of this upon the style of the age may be reduced to two forms. Formerly the natural impulse of every man was spontaneously to use the language of life; the language of books was a secondary attainment not made without effort. Now, on the contrary, the daily composers of newspapers have so long dealt in the professional idiom of books, as to have brought it home to every reader in the nation who does not violently resist it by some domestic advantages. Time was, within our own remembrance, that if you should have heard, in passing along the street, from any old apple-woman such a phrase as "I will *avail myself* of your kindness," forthwith you would have shied like a skittish horse; you would have run away in as much terror as any old Roman upon those occasions when *Bos loquebatur*. At present you swallow such marvels as matters of course. The whole artificial dialect of books has come into play as the dialect of ordinary life. This is one form of the evil impressed upon our style by

journalism; a dire monotony of bookish idiom has encrusted and stiffened all native freedom of expression, like some scaly leprosy or elephantiasis, barking and hide-binding the fine natural pulses of the elastic flesh. Another and almost a worse evil has established itself in the prevailing structure of sentences. Every man who has had any experience in writing, knows how natural it is for hurry and fulness of matter to discharge itself by vast sentences, involving clause within clause *ad infinitum;* how difficult it is, and how much a work of art, to break up this huge fasciculus of cycle and epicycle into a graceful succession of sentences, long intermingled with short, each modifying the other, and arising musically by links of spontaneous connexion. Now the plethoric form of period, this monster model of sentence, bloated with decomplex intercalations, and exactly repeating the form of syntax which distinguishes an act of Parliament, is the prevailing model in newspaper eloquence. Crude undigested masses of suggestion, furnishing rather raw materials for composition and jottings for the memory, than any formal developments of the ideas, describe the quality of writing which *must* prevail in journalism: not from defect of talents, which are at this day of that superior class which may be presumed from the superior importance of the function itself; but from the

necessities of hurry and of instant compliance with an instant emergency, granting no possibility for revision or opening for amended thought, which are evils attached to the flying velocities of public business.

As to structure of sentence and the periodic involution, *that* scarcely admits of being exemplified in the conversation of those who do not write. But the choice of phraseology is naturally and easily echoed in the colloquial forms of those who surrender themselves to such an influence. To mark in what degree this contagion of bookishness has spread, and how deeply it has moulded the habits of expression in classes naturally the least likely to have been reached by a revolution so artificial in its character, we will report a single record from the memorials of our own experience. Some eight years ago we had occasion to look for lodgings in a newly-built suburb of London to the south of the Thames. The mistress of the house (with respect to whom we have nothing to report more than that she was in the worst sense a vulgar woman: that is, not merely a low-bred person—so much might have been expected from her occupation—but morally vulgar by the evidence of her own complex precautions against fraud, reasonabloe enough in so dangerous a capital, but not calling for the very ostentatious display of them which she obtruded

upon us) was in regular training, it appeared, as a student of newspapers. She had no children; the newspapers were her children. There lay her studies; that branch of learning constituted her occupation from morning to night; and the following were amongst the words which she—this semi-barbarian—poured from her cornucopia during the very few minutes of our interview; which interview was brought to an abrupt issue by mere nervous agitation upon our part. The words, as noted down within an hour of the occasion, and after allowing a fair time for our recovery, were these:—First, "category;" secondly, "predicament" (where, by the way, from the twofold iteration of the idea—Greek and Roman—it appears that the old lady was "twice armed"); thirdly, "individuality;" fourthly, "procrastination;" fifthly, "speaking diplomatically, would not wish to *commit* herself;" who knew but that inadvertently she might even *compromise* both herself and her husband; sixthly, "would spontaneously adapt the several modes of domestication to the reciprocal interests," etc.; and finally (which word it was that settled us; we heard it as we reached the topmost stair on the second floor; and, without further struggle against our instincts, round we wheeled, rushed down forty-five stairs, and exploded from the house with a fury, causing us to impinge against

an obese or protuberant gentleman, and calling for mutual explanations; a result which nothing *could* account for, but a steel bow, or mustachios on the lip of an elderly woman; meantime the fatal word was), seventhly, "anteriorly." Concerning which word we solemnly depose and make affidavit, that neither from man, woman, nor book, had we ever heard it before this unique rencontre with this abominable woman on the staircase. The occasion which furnished the excuse for such a word was this: From the staircase-window we saw a large shed in the rear of the house; apprehending some nuisance of "manufacturing industry" in our neighbourhood, —"What's that?" we demanded. Mark the answer: "A shed; that's what it is; *videlicet* a shed; and anteriorly to the existing shed there was ——;" *what* there was, posterity must consent to have wrapt up in darkness, for there came on our nervous seizure, which intercepted further communication. But observe, as a point which took away any gleam of consolation from the case, the total absence of all *malaprop* picturesqueness, that might have defeated its deadly action upon the nervous system. No; it is due to the integrity of *her* disease, and to the completeness of *our* suffering, that we should attest the unimpeachable correctness of her words, and of the syntax by which she connected them.

Now, if we could suppose the case that the old household idiom of the land were generally so extinguished amongst us as it was in this particular instance; if we could imagine, as a *universal* result of journalism, that a coarse unlettered woman, having occasion to say, "this or that stood in such a place before the present shed," should take as a natural or current formula, "anteriorly to the existing shed there stood," &c., what would be the final effect upon our literature? Pedantry, though it were unconscious pedantry, once steadily diffused through a nation as to the very moulds of its thinking, and the general tendencies of its expression, could not but stiffen the natural graces of composition, and weave fetters about the free movement of human thought. This would interfere as effectually with our power of enjoying much that is excellent in our past literature, as it would with our future powers of producing. And such an agency has been too long at work amongst us, not to have already accomplished some part of these separate evils. Amongst women of education, as we have argued above, standing aloof from literature, and less uniformly drawing their intellectual sustenance from newspapers, the deadening effects have been partially counteracted. Here and there, amongst individuals alive to the particular evils of the age, and watching the very set of the current, there may

have been even a more systematic counteraction applied to the mischief. But the great evil in such cases is this, that we cannot see the extent of the changes wrought or being wrought, from having ourselves partaken in them. *Tempora mutantur;* and naturally, if we could review them with the neutral eye of a stranger, it would be impossible for us not to see the extent of those changes. But our eye is *not* neutral; we also have partaken in the changes; *nos et mutamur in illis.* And this fact disturbs the power of appreciating those changes. Every one of us would have felt, sixty years ago, that the general tone and colouring of a style was stiff, bookish, pedantic, which, from the habituation of our organs, we now feel to be natural and within the privilege of learned art. Direct objective qualities it is always by comparison easy to measure; but the difficulty commences when we have to combine with this outer measurement of the object another corresponding measurement of the subjective or inner qualities by which we apply the measure; that is, when besides the objects projected to a distance from the spectator, we have to allow for variations or disturbances in the very eye which surveys them. The eye cannot see itself; we cannot project from ourselves, and contemplate as an object our own contemplating faculty, or appreciate our own appreciating power. Biases, therefore, or

gradual warpings, that have occurred in our critical faculty as applied to style, we can not allow for; and these biases will unconsciously mask to our perceptions an amount of change in the quality of popular style such as we could not easily credit.

Separately from this change for the worse in the drooping idiomatic freshness of our diction, which is a change that has been going on for a century, the other characteristic defect of this age lies in the tumid and tumultuary structure of our sentences. The one change has partly grown out of the other. Ever since a more bookish air was impressed upon composition without much effort by the Latinized and artificial phraseology, by forms of expression consecrated to books, and by "long-tailed words in *osity* and *ation*," either because writers felt that already, in this one act of preference shown to the artificial vocabulary, they had done enough to establish a differential character of regular composition, and on that consideration thought themselves entitled to neglect the combination of their words into sentences or periods; or because there is a real natural sympathy between the Latin phraseology and a Latin structure of sentence; certain it is, and remarkable, that our popular style in the common limited sense of arrangement applied to words or the syntax of sentences, has laboured with two faults that might have been thought incompatible; it has been artificial, by

artifices peculiarly adapted to the powers of the Latin language, and yet at the very same time careless and disordinate. There is a strong idea expressed by the Latin word *incondītus*, *disorganized*, or rather *unorganized*. Now, in spite of its artificial bias, that is the very epithet which will best characterize our newspaper style. To be viewed as susceptible of organization, such periods must already be elaborate and artificial; to be viewed as not having received it, such periods must be hyperbolically careless.

But perhaps the very best illustration of all this will be found in putting the case of English style into close juxtaposition with the style of the French and Germans, our only very important neighbours. As leaders of civilization, as *powers* in an intellectual sense, there are but three nations in Europe—England, Germany, France. As to Spain and Italy, outlying extremities, they are not moving bodies; they rest upon the past. Russia and North America are the two bulwarks of Christendom east and west. But the three powers *at the centre* are in all senses the motive forces of civilization. In all things they have the initiation, and they preside.

By this comparison we shall have the advantage of doing what the French express by *s'orienter*, the Germans by *sich orientiren*. Learning one of our bearings on the compass we shall be able to

deduce the rest, and we shall be able to conjecture our valuation as respects the art by finding our place amongst the artists.

With respect to French style, we can imagine the astonishment of an English author practised in composition, and with no previous knowledge of French literature, who should first find himself ranging freely amongst a French library. That particular fault of style which in English books is all but universal, absolutely has not an existence in the French. Speaking rigorously and to the very letter of the case, we, upon a large experience in French literature, affirm that it would be nearly impossible (perhaps strictly so) to cite an instance of that cumbrous and unwieldy style which disfigures English composition so extensively. Enough could not be adduced to satisfy the purpose of illustration. And to make a Frenchman sensible of the fault as a possibility, you must appeal to some *translated* model.

But why? The cause of this national immunity from a fault so common everywhere else, and so natural when we look into the producing occasions, is as much entitled to our notice as the immunity itself. The fault is inevitable, as one might fancy, to two conditions of mind: hurry in the first place; want of art in the second. The French must be liable to these disadvantages as much as their neighbours; by what magic is

it that they evade them or neutralize them in the result? The secret lies here: beyond all nations, by constitutional vivacity, the French are a nation of talkers, and the model of their sentences is moulded by that fact. Conversation, which is a luxury for other nations, is for them a necessity: by the very law of their peculiar intellect and of its social training they are colloquial. Hence it happens that there are no such people endured or ever heard of in France as *allo*quial wits; people who talk *to* but not *with* a circle: the very finest of their *beaux esprits* must submit to the equities of conversation, and would be crushed summarily as monsters if they were to seek a selfish mode of display or a privilegeof lecturing any audience of a *salon* who had met for purposes of *social* pleasure, "*De monologue*," as Madame de Staël, in her broken English, described this mode of display when speaking of Coleridge, is so far from being tolerated in France as an accomplishment, that it is not even understood as a disease. This kind of what may be called irresponsible talk, when a man runs on *perpetuo tenore*, not accountable for any opinion to his auditors open to no contradiction, liable to no competition, has sometimes procured for a man in England the affix of *River* to his name: *Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum*. In Dryden's happy version,—

"He flows, and, as he flows, for ever will flow on."

But that has been in cases where the talking impulse was sustained by mere vivacity of animal spirits, without knowledge to support it, and liable to the full weight of Archbishop Huet's sarcasm, that it was a diarrhœa of garrulity, a *fluxe de bouche.* But in cases like that of Coleridge, where the solitary display, if selfish, is still dignified by a pomp of knowledge, and a knowledge which you feel to have been fused and combined by the genial circumstances of the speaker's position in the centre of an admiring circle; we English do still recognise the *métier* of a professional talker as a privileged mode of social display. People are asked to come and hear such a performer, as you form a select party to hear Thalberg or Paganini. The thing is understood at least with us; right or wrong there is an understanding amongst the company that you are not to interrupt the great man of the night. You may prompt him by a question; you may set him in motion; but to begin arguing against him would be felt as not less unseasonable than to insist on whistling Jim Crow during the *bravuras* and *tours de force* of great musical artists.

In France, therefore, from the intense adaptation of the national mind to real colloquial intercourse, for which reciprocation is indispensable, the form of sentence in use is adjusted to that primary condition; brief, terse, simple;

shaped to avoid misunderstanding, and to meet the impatience of those who are waiting for their turn. People who write rapidly everywhere write as they talk; it is impossible to do otherwise, Taking a pen into his hand, a man frames his periods exactly as he would do if addressing a companion. So far the Englishman and the Frenchman are upon the same level. Suppose them, therefore, both preparing to speak; an Englishman in such a situation has no urgent motive for turning his thoughts to any other object than the prevailing one of the moment, viz., how best to convey his meaning. That object weighs also with the Frenchman; but he has a previous, a paramount object to watch — the necessity of avoiding *des longueurs*. The rights, the equities of conversation are but dimly present to the mind of the Englishman. From the mind of a Frenchman they are never absent. To an Englishman, the right of occupying the attention of the company seems to inhere in *things* rather than in persons; if the particular subject under discussion should happen to be a grave one, then, in right of *that*, and not by any right of his own, a speaker will seem to an Englishman invested with the privilege of drawing largely upon the attention of a company. But to a Frenchman this right of participation in the talk is a *personal* right, which cannot be set aside by any possible

claims in the subject; it passes by necessity to and fro, backwards and forwards, between the several persons who are present; and, as in the games of battledore and shuttlecock, or of "hunt the slipper," the momentary subject of interest never *can* settle or linger for any length of time in any one individual, without violating the rules of the sport, or suspending its movement. Inevitably, therefore, the structure of sentence must for ever be adapted to this primary function of the French national intellect, the function of communicativeness, and to the necessities (for to the French they *are* necessities) of social intercourse, and (speaking plainly) of interminable garrulity.

Hence it is that in French authors, whatever may otherwise be the differences of their minds, or the differences of their themes, uniformly we find the periods short, rapid, unelaborate: Pascal or Helvetius, Condillac or Rousseau, Montesquieu or Voltaire, Buffon or Duclos,—all alike are terse, perspicuous, brief. Even Mirabeau or Chateaubriand, so much modified by foreign intercourse, in this point adhere to their national models. Even Bossuet or Bourdaloue, where the diffusiveness and amplitude of oratory might have been pleaded as a dispensation, are not more licentious in this respect than their compatriots. One rise in every sentence, one gentle descent, that is the

law for French composition; even too monotonously so; and thus it happens that such a thing as a long or an involved sentence can hardly be produced from French literature, though a sultan were to offer his daughter in marriage to the man who should find it. Whereas now, amongst us English, not only is the too general tendency of our sentences towards hyperbolical length, but it will be found continually, that instead of one rise and one corresponding fall — one *arsis* and one *thesis* — there are many. Flux and reflux, swell and cadence, that is the movement for a sentence; but our modern sentences agitate us by rolling fires, after the fashion of those internal earthquakes that, not content with one throe, run along spasmodically in a long succession of intermitting convulsions.

It is not often that a single fault can produce any vast amount of evil. But there are cases where it does; and this is one: the effect of weariness and of repulsion, which may arise from this single vice of unwieldy comprehensiveness in the structure of sentences, cannot better be illustrated than by a frank exposure of what often happens to ourselves, and (as we differ as to this case only by consciously noticing what all feel) must often happen to others. In the evening, when it is natural that we should feel a craving for rest, some book lies near us which is written

in a style, clear, tranquil, easy to follow. Just at that moment comes in the wet newspaper, dripping with the dewy freshness of its news; and even in its parliamentary memorials promising so much interest, that, let them be treated in what manner they may merely for the subjects, they are often commandingly attractive. The attraction indeed is but too potent; the interest but too exciting. Yet, after all, many times we lay aside the journal, and we acquiesce in the gentler stimulation of the book. Simply the news we may read; but the discussions, whether direct from the editor, or reported from the Parliament, we refuse or we delay. And why? It is the subject, perhaps you think; it is the great political question, too agitating by the consequences it may happen to involve. No. All this, if treated in a winning style, we could bear. It is the effort, the toil, the exertion of mind requisite to follow the discussion through endless and labyrinthine sentences; this it is which compels us to forego the journal, or to lay it aside until the next morning.

Those who are not accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon the feelings, or have had little experience in voluminous reading pursued for weeks, would scarcely imagine how much of downright physical exhaustion is produced by what is technically called the *periodic*

style of writing; it is not the length, the *απεραντολογια*, the paralytic flux of words; it is not even the cumbrous involution of parts within parts, separately considered, that bears so heavily upon the attention. It is the suspense, the holding-on of the mind until what is called the *αποδοσις*, or coming round of the sentence commences; that it is which wears out the faculty of attention. A sentence, for example, begins with a series of *ifs;* perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied; here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along; for as yet all is hypothetic; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency; you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet, having done *that* by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reacting attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustains it. In fact, under the rude yet also artificial character of newspaper style, each separate monster period is a vast arch, which, not receiving its keystone, not being locked into self-supporting cohesion, until you nearly reach its close, imposes of necessity upon the unhappy reader all the *onus*

of its ponderous weight through the main process of its construction. The continued repetition of so Atlantean an effort soon overwhelms your patience, and establishes at length that habitual feeling which causes you to shrink from the speculations of journalists, or (which is more likely) to adopt a worse habit than absolute neglect, which we shall notice immediately.

Meantime, as we have compared ourselves on this important point with the French, let us now complete our promise, by noticing our relation in the same point to the Germans. Even on its own account, and without any view to our present purpose, the character of German prose is an object of legitimate astonishment. Whatever is bad in our own ideal of prose style, whatever is repulsive in our own practice, we see there carried to the most outrageous excess. Herod is out-Heroded, Sternhold is out-Sternholded, with a zealotry of extravagance that really seems like wilful burlesque. Lessing, Herder, Paul Richter, and Lichtenberg, with some few beside, either prompted by nature or trained upon foreign models, have avoided the besetting sin of German prose. Any man of distinguished talent, whose attention has been once called steadily to this subject, cannot fail to avoid it. The misfortune of most writers has been, that, once occupied with the interest of *things*, and overwhelmed by

the embarrassments of disputed *doctrines*, they never advert to any question affecting what they view, by comparison, as a trifle. The τὸ *docendum*, the thing to be taught, has availed to obscure or even to annihilate for their eyes every anxiety as to the mode of teaching. And, as one conspicuous example of careless style acts by its authority to create many more, we need not wonder at the results, even when they reach a point of what may be called monstrous. Among ten thousand offenders, who carry their neglect of style even to that point, we would single out Immanuel Kant. Such is the value of his philosophy in some sections, and partially it is so very capable of a lucid treatment, intelligible to the plainest man of reflective habits, that within no long interval we shall certainly see him naturalized amongst ourselves; there are particular applications of his philosophy not contemplated by himself, for which we venture to predict that even the religious student will ultimately be thankful, when the cardinal principles have been brought under a clear light of interpretation. Attention will then be forced upon his style, and facts will come forward not credible without experimental proof. For instance, we have lying before us at this moment his *Critik der Practischen Vernunft* in the unpirated edition of Hartknoch, the respectable publisher of all Kant's great

works. The text is therefore authentic; and being a fourth edition (Riga, 1797), must be presumed to have benefitted by the author's careful revision. We have no time for search; but on barely throwing open the book, we see a sentence at pp. 70, 71, exactly covering one whole octavo page of thirty-one lines (each line averaging forty-five to forty-eight letters). Sentences of the same calibre, some even of far larger *bore*, we have observed in this and other works of the same author. And it is not the fact taken as an occasional possibility, it is the prevailing character of his style, that we insist on as the most formidable barrier to the study of his writings, and to the progress of what will soon be acknowledged as important in his principles. A sentence is viewed by him, and by most of his countrymen, as a rude mould or elastic form admitting of expansion to any possible extent: it is laid down as a rough outline, and then by superstruction and *epi*-superstruction it is gradually reared to a giddy altitude which no eye can follow. Yielding to his natural impulse of subjoining all additions, or exceptions, or modifications, not in the shape of separate consecutive sentences, but as intercalations and stuffings of one original sentence, Kant might naturally enough have written a book from beginning to end in one vast hyperbolical sentence. We sometimes see an English Act of

Parliament which does literally accomplish that end, by an artifice which in law has a purpose and a use. Instead of laying down a general proposition, which is partially false until it has received its proper restraints, the framer of the act endeavours to evade even this momentary falsehood by coupling the limitations with the very primary enunciation of the truth: *e. g.*, A. shall be entitled, provided always that he is under the circumstances of *e*, or *i*, or *o*, to the right of X. Thus, even a momentary compliance with the false notion of an absolute unconditional claim to X. is evaded; a truth which is only a conditional truth, is stated as such from the first. There is, therefore, a theoretic use. But what is the practical result? Why, that when you attempt to read an Act of Parliament where the exceptions, the secondary exceptions to the exceptions, the limitations and the sub-limitations, descend, *seriatim*, by a vast scale of dependencies, the mind finds itself overtasked; the energy of the most energetic begins to droop; and so inevitable is that result, that Mr. Pitt, a minister unusually accomplished for such process by constitution of mind and by practice, publicly avowed his inability to follow so trying a conflict with technical embarrassments. He declared himself to be lost in the labyrinth of clauses: the Ariadne's clue was wanting for his final extrica-

tion: and he described his situation at the end with the simplicity natural to one who was no charlatan, and sought for no reputation by the tricks of a funambulist: "In the crowd of things excepted and counter-excepted, he really ceased to understand the main point—what it was that the law allowed, and what it was that it disallowed."

We might have made our readers merry with the picture of German prose; but we must not linger. It is enough to say, that it offers the counterpole to the French style. Our own popular style, and (what is worse) the *tendency* of our own, is to the German extreme. To those who read German, indeed, German prose, as written by the mob of authors, presents, as in a Brobdignagian and exaggerating mirror, the most offensive faults of our own.

But these faults—are they in practice so wearisome and exhausting as we have described them? Possibly not; and, where that happens to be the case, let the reader ask himself if it is not by means of an evasion worse in its effects than any fault of style could ever prove in its most overcharged form. Shrinking, through long experience, from the plethoric form of cumulation and "periodic" writing in which the journalist supports or explains his views, every man who puts a business value upon his time, slips naturally into a trick of short-hand reading. It is more, even by the effort

and tension of mind in *holding on*, than by the mere loss of time, that most readers are repelled from the habit of careful reading. An evil of modern growth is met by a modern remedy. Every man gradually learns an art of catching at the leading words, and the cardinal or hinge-joints of transition, which proclaim the general course of a writer's speculation. Now it is very true, and is sure to be objected, that where so much is certain to prove mere iteration and teasing *surplusage*, little can be lost by this or any other process of abridgement. Certainly, as regards the particular subject concerned, there may be no room to apprehend a serious injury. Not there, not in any direct interest, but in a far larger interest — indirect for the moment, but the most direct and absolute of all interests for an intellectual being, the reader suffers a permanent debilitation. He acquires a factitious propensity; he forms an incorrigible habit of desultory reading. Now, to say of a man's knowledge, that it will be shallow, or (which is worse than shallow) will be erroneous and insecure in its foundations, is vastly to underrate the evil of such a habit: it is by reaction upon a man's faculties, it is by the effects reflected upon his judging and reasoning powers, that loose habits of reading tell eventually. And these are durable effects. Even as respects the minor purpose of information, better it is, by a thousandfold to

have read threescore of books (chosen judiciously) with severe attention, than to have raced through the library of the Vatican at a newspaper pace. But, as respects the final habits acquired, habits of thinking coherently and of judging soundly, better that a man should have not read one line throughout his life, than have travelled through the journals of Europe by this random process of "reading short."

Yet, by this Parthian habit of aiming at full gallop; of taking flying shots at conspicuous marks, and, like Parthians also, directing their chance arrows whilst retreating, and revolting with horror from a direct approach to the object, thus it is that the young and the flexible are trained amongst us under the increasing tyranny of journalism. A large part of the evil, therefore, belongs to style; for it is this which repels readers, and enforces the short-hand process of desultory reading. A large part of the evil, therefore, is of a nature to receive a remedy.

It is with a view to that practical part of the extensive evil, that we have shaped our present notice of popular style, as made operative amongst ourselves. One single vice of periodic syntax, a vice unknown to the literature of Greece, and, until Paterculus, even of Rome (although the language of Rome was so naturally adapted to that vice), has with us counterbalanced all possible

vices of any other order. Simply by the vast sphere of its agency for evil, in the habits of mind which it produces and supports, such a vice merits a consideration which would else be disproportionate. Yet at the same time, it must not be forgotten, that if the most operative of all vices, after all it is but one. What are the others?

It is a fault, amongst many faults, of such works as we have on this subject of style, that they collect the list of qualities, good or bad, to which composition is liable, not under any principle from which they might be deduced *à priori*, so as to be assured that all had been enumerated, but by a tentative groping, a mere conjectural estimate. The word *style* has with us a twofold meaning: one, the narrow meaning, expressing the mere *synthesis onomatōn*, the syntaxis or combination of words into sentences; the other of far wider extent, and expressing all possible relations that can arise between thoughts and words—the total effect of a writer as derived from manner. Style may be viewed as an *organic* thing and as a *mechanic* thing. By organic, we mean that which, being acted upon, reacts, and which propagates the communicated power without loss. By mechanic, that which, being impressed with motion, cannot throw it back without loss, and therefore soon comes to an end. The human body is an elaborate system of organs; it is sustained by

organs. But the human body is exercised as a machine, and as such may be viewed in the arts of riding, dancing, leaping, etc., subject to the laws of motion and equilibrium. Now, the use of words is an organic thing, in so far as language is connected with thoughts, and modified by thoughts. It is a mechanic thing, in so far as words in combination determine or modify each other. The science of style as an organ of thought, of style in relation to the ideas and feelings, might be called the *organology* of style. The science of style considered as a machine, in which words act upon words, and through a particular grammar, might be called the *mechanology* of style. It is of little importance by what name these two functions of composition are expressed. But it is of great importance not to confound the functions; that function by which style maintains a commerce with thought, and that by which it chiefly communicates with grammar and with words. A pedant will only insist upon the names; but the distinction in the ideas, under some name, can be neglected only by the man who is careless of logic.

We know not how far we may be ever called upon to proceed with this discussion; if it should happen that we were, an interesting field of questions would lie before us for the first part (the organology). It would lead us over the

ground trodden by the Greek and Roman rhetoricians, and over those particular questions which have arisen by the contrast between the circumstances of the ancients and our own since the origin of printing. Punctuation,* trivial as such an innovation may seem, was the product of typography, and it is interesting to trace the effects upon style even of that one slight addition to the resources of logic. Previously a man was driven to depend for his security against misunderstanding upon the pure virtue of his syntax. Miscollocation or dislocation of related words disturbed the whole sense; its least effect was to give *no* sense, often it gave a dangerous sense. Now punctuation was an artificial machinery for

* This is a most instructive fact, and it is another fact not less instructive, that lawyers in most parts of Christendom, I believe, certainly wherever they are wide awake professionally, tolerate no punctuation. But why? Are lawyers not sensible to the luminous effect from a point happily placed? Yes, they *are* sensible; but also they are sensible of the false prejudicating effect from a punctuation managed (as too generally it is) carelessly and illogically. Here is the brief abstract of the case. All punctuation narrows the path, which else unlimited; and (*by* narrowing it) may chance to guide the reader into the right groove amongst several that are *not* right. But also punctuation has the effect very often (and almost always has the power) of biassing and predetermining the reader to an erroneous choice of meaning. Better, therefore, no guide at all than one which is likely enough to lead astray, and which must always be suspected and mistrusted, inasmuch as very nearly always it has the *power* to lead astray.

maintaining the integrity of the sense against all mistakes of the writer; and as one consequence, it withdrew the energy of men's anxieties from the natural machinery, which lay in just and careful arrangement. Another and still greater machinery of art for the purpose of maintaining the sense, and with the effect of relaxing the care of the writer, lay in the exquisitely artificial structure of the Latin language, which by means of its terminal forms, indicated the arrangement, and referred the proper predicate to the proper subject, spite of all that affectation or negligence could do to disturb the series of the logic or the succession of the syntax. Greek of course had the same advantage in kind but not in degree, and thence rose some differences which have escaped all notice of rhetoricians. Here also would properly arise the question started by Charles Fox (but probably due originally to the conversation of some far subtler friend, such as Edmund Burke), how far the practice of foot-notes—a practice purely modern in its *form*—is reconcilable with the laws of just composition: and whether in virtue, though not in form, such foot-notes did not exist for the ancients, by an evasion we could point out. The question is clearly one which grows out of style in its relations to thought; how far, viz., such an excrescence as a note argues that the sentence to

which it is attached has not received the benefit of a full development for the conception involved; whether, if thrown into the furnace again and re-melted, it might not be so recast as to absorb the redundancy which had previously flowed over into a note. Under this head would fall not only all the differential questions of style and composition between us and the ancients, but also the questions of merit as fairly distributed amongst the moderns compared with each other. The French, as we recently insisted, undoubtedly possess one vast advantage over all other nations in the good taste which governs the arrangement of their sentences; in the simplicity (a strange pretension to make for anything French) of the modulation under which their thoughts flow; in the absence of all cumbrous involution, and in the quick succession of their periods. In reality this invaluable merit tends to an excess; and the *style coupé* as opposed to the *style soutenu*, flippancy opposed to solemnity, the subsultory to the continuous, these are the two frequent extremities to which the French manner betrays men. Better, however, to be flippant, than by a revolting form of tumour and perplexity to lead men into habits of intellect such as result from the modern vice of English style. Still with all its practical value it is evident that the intellectual merits of the French style are but small. They are chiefly

negative in the first place; and secondly, founded in the acoident of their colloquial necessities. The law of conversation has prescribed the model of their sentences, and in that law there is quite as much of self-interest at work as of respect for equity. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.* Give and take is the rule; and he who expects to be heard must condescend to listen; which necessity for both parties binds over both to be brief. Brevity so won could at any rate have little merit, and it is certain that for profound thinking it must sometimes be a hindrance. In order to be brief a man must take a short sweep of view; his range of thought cannot be extensive; and such a rule applied to a general method of thinking, is fitted rather to aphorisms and maxims as upon a known subject, than to any process of investigation as upon a subject yet to be fathomed. Advancing still further into the examination of style as the organ of thinking, we should find occasion to see the prodigious defects of the French in all the higher qualities of prose composition. One advantage, for a practical purpose of life, is sadly counterbalanced by numerous faults, many of which are faults of *stamina*, lying not in any corrigible defects, but in such as imply penury of thinking from radical inaptitude in the thinking faculty to connect itself with the feeling and with the creative faculty of

the imagination. There are many other researches belonging to this subtlest of subjects, affecting both the logic and the ornaments of style, which would fall under the head of organology. But for instant practical use, though far less difficult for investigation, yet for that reason far more tangible and appreciable, would be all the suggestions proper to the other head of mechanology. Half a dozen rules for evading the most frequently recurring forms of awkwardness, of obscurity, of misproportion, and of double meaning, would do more to assist a writer in practice, laid under some necessity of hurry, than volumes of general disquisition. It makes us blush to add that even grammar is so little of a perfect attainment amongst us that with two or three exceptions (one being Shakspere, whom some affect to consider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age), we have never seen the writer, through a circuit of prodigious reading, who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax of English grammar.

Whatever becomes of our own possible speculations, we shall conclude with insisting on the growing necessity of style as a practical interest of daily life. Upon subjects of public concern, and in proportion to that concern, there will always be a suitable (and as letters extend a growing) competition. Other things being equal,

or appearing to be equal, the determining principle for the public choice will lie in the style. Of a German book, otherwise entitled to respect, it was said—*er lässt sich nicht lesen*—it does not permit itself to be read, such and so repulsive was the style. Among ourselves this has long been true of newspapers, they do not suffer themselves to be read *in extenso*, and they are read short, with what injury to the mind we have noticed. The same style of reading, once largely practised, is applied universally. To this special evil an improvement of style would apply a special redress. The same improvement is otherwise clamorously called for by each man's interest of competition. Public luxury, which is gradually consulted by everything else, must at length be consulted in style.

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## PART II.

It is a natural resource that whatsoever we find it difficult to investigate as a result, we endeavour to follow as a growth; failing analytically to probe its nature, historically we seek relief to our perplexities by tracing its origin. Not able to assign the elements of its theory, we endeavour to detect them in the stages of its development.

Thus, for instance, when any feudal institution (be it Gothic, Norman, or Anglo-Saxon) eludes our deciphering faculty from the imperfect records of its use and operation, then we endeavour conjecturally to amend our knowledge by watching the circumstances in which that institution arose; and from the necessities of the age, as indicated by facts which have survived, we are sometimes able to trace, through all their corresponding stages of growth, the natural succession of arrangements which such necessities would be likely to prescribe.

This mode of oblique research, where a more direct one is denied, we find to be the only one in our power. And, with respect to the liberal arts, it is even more true than with respect to laws or institutions, because remote ages widely separated differ much more in their pleasures than they can ever do in their social necessities. To make property safe and life sacred, that is everywhere a primary purpose of law. But the intellectual amusements of men are so different that the very purposes and elementary functions of these amusements are different. They point to different ends as well as different means. The drama, for instance, in Greece, connects itself with religion; in other ages, religion is the power most in resistance to the drama. Hence, and because the elder and ruder ages are most favourable to a

ceremonial and mythological religion, we find the tragedy of Greece defunct before the literary age arose. Aristotle's era may be taken as the earliest era of refinement and literary development. But Aristotle wrote his Essay on the Greek Tragedy just a century after the *chefs-d'œuvre* of that tragedy had been published.

If, therefore, it is sometimes requisite for the proper explanation even of a law or legal usage that we should go to its history, not looking for a sufficient key to its meaning in the mere analogies of our own social necessities, much more will that be requisite in explaining an art or a mode of intellectual pleasure. Why it was that the ancients had no landscape-painting, is a question deep almost as the mystery of life, and harder of solution than all the problems of jurisprudence combined. What causes moulded the tragedy of the ancients could hardly be guessed if we did not happen to know its history and mythologic origin. And with respect to what is called *Style*, not so much as a sketch, as an outline, as a hint, could be furnished towards the earliest speculations upon this subject, if we should overlook the historical facts connected with its earliest development.

What was it that first produced into this world that celebrated thing called *Prose?* It was the bar, it was the hustings, it was the *Bema* (το

βημα). What Gibbon and most historians of the Mussulmans have rather absurdly called the pulpit of the Caliphs, should rather be called the rostrum, the Roman military *suggestus*, or Athenian *bema*. The fierce and generally illiterate Mohammedan harangued his troops; preach he could not; he had no subject for preaching.*

* "*No subject*:"—If he had a subject, what was it? As to the sole doctrines of Islam—the unity of God, and the mission of Mahomet as his chief prophet (*i.e.*, not predictor or foreseer, but interpreter)—*that* must be presumed known to every man in a Mussulman army, since otherwise he could not have been admitted into the army. But these doctrines might require expansion, or at least evidence? Not at all; the Mussulman believes them incapable of either. But at least the Caliph might mount the pulpit in order to urge the primary duty of propagating the true faith? No; it was *not* the primary duty, it was a secondary duty, else there would have been no option allowed—tribute, death, or conversion. Well then, the Caliph might ascend the pulpit for the purpose of enforcing a secondary duty? No; he could not, because that was no duty of time or place; it was a postulate of the conscience at all times alike, and needed no argument or illustration. Why then, what *was* it that the Caliph talked about? It was this: He praised the man who had cut most throats; he pronounced the funeral panegyric of him who had his own throat cut under the banners of the Prophet; he explained the prudential merits of the next movement or of the next campaign. In fact, he did precisely what Pericles did, what Scipio did, what Cæsar did, what it was a regular part of the Roman Imperator's commission to do, both before a battle and after a battle, and universally under any circumstances which make an explanation necessary. What is now done in "general orders" was then committed to a *vivâ voce* communication. Trifling communications probably devolved on the six centurions of each cohort (or regiment); graver communications were reserved

Now this function of man in almost all states of society, the function of public haranguing, was, for the Pagan man who had no printing-press, more of a mere necessity through every mode of public life, than it is for the modern man of Christian light; for as to the modern man of Mohammedan twilight, his perfect bigotry denies him this characteristic resource of Christian energies. Just four centuries have we of the Cross propagated our light by this memorable invention; just four centuries have the slaves of the Crescent clung to their darkness by rejecting it. Christianity signs her name; Islamism makes her mark. And the great doctors of the Mussulmans take their stand precisely where Jack Cade took *his* a few years after printing had been discovered. Jack and they both made it felony to be found with a spelling-book, and sorcery to deal with syntax.

to the Imperator, surrounded by his staff. Why we should mislead the student by calling this solemnity of addressing an army from a *tribunal* or *suggestus*, by the irrelevant name of preaching from a pulpit, can only be understood by those who perceive the false view taken of the Mohammedan faith and its relation to the human mind. It was certainly a poor plagiarism from the Judaic and the Christian creeds, but it did not rise so high as to conceive of any truth that needed or that admitted intellectual development, or that was susceptible of exposition and argument. However, if we will have it that the Caliph preached, then did his lieutenant say *Amen*. If Omar was a parson, then certainly Caled was his clerk.

Yet with these differences, all of us alike, Pagan, Mussulman, Christian, have practised the arts of public speaking as the most indispensable resource of public administration and of private intrigue. Whether the purpose were to pursue the interests of legislation, or to conduct the business of jurisprudence, or to bring the merits of great citizens pathetically before their countrymen; or (if the state were democratic enough) oftentimes to explain the conduct of the executive government; oftentimes also to prosecute a scheme of personal ambition, whether the audience were a mob, a senate, a judicial tribunal, or an army, equally) though not in equal degrees) for the Pagan of 2500 years back, and for us moderns, the arts of public speaking, and consequently of prose as opposed to metrical composition, have been the capital engine, the one great intellectual machine of civil life.

This, to some people, may seem a matter of course: "Would you have men speak in rhyme?" We answer, that when society comes into a state of refinement, the total uses of language are developed in common with other arts; but originally, and whilst man was in his primitive condition of simplicity, it must have seemed an unnatural, nay an absurd thing to speak in prose. For in those elder days the sole justifying or exciting cases for a public harangue would be

cases connected with impassioned motives. Rare they would be, as they had need to be, where both the "hon. gentleman" who moves, and his "hon. friend" who seconds, are required to speak in Trimeter Iambic. Hence the necessity that the oracles should be delivered in verse. Who ever heard of a prose oracle? And hence, as Grecian taste expanded, the disagreeable criticisms whispered about in Athens as to the coarse quality of the verses that proceeded from Delphi. It was like bad Latin from Oxford. Apollo himself to turn out of his own temple, in the very age of Sophocles, such Birmingham hexameters as sometimes astonished Greece, was like our English court keeping a Stephen Duck, the thresher, for the national poet-laureate, at a time when Pope was fixing an era in the literature. Metre fell to a discount in such learned times. But in itself metre must always have been the earliest vehicle for public enunciations of truth among men, for these obvious reasons: 1. That if metre rises above the standard of ordinary household life, so must any truth of importance and singularity enough to challenge a public utterance. 2. That because religious communications will always have taken a metrical form by a natural association of feeling, whatsoever is invested with a privileged character will seek something of a religious sanction by assuming the same external

shape; and, 3. That expressions, or emphatic verbal forms, which are naturally courted for the sake of pointed effect, receive a justification from metre, as being already a departure from common usage to begin with, whereas in plain prose they would appear so many affectations. Metre is naturally and necessarily adopted in cases of impassioned themes, for the very obvious reason that rhythmus is both a cause of impassioned feeling, an ally of such feeling, and a natural effect of it; but upon other subjects *not* impassioned, metre is also a subtle ally, because it serves to introduce and to reconcile with our sense of propriety various arts of condensation, of antithesis, and other rhetorical effects, which, without the metre (as a key for harmonizing them) would strike the feelings as unnatural or as full of affectation. Interrogations, for example, passionate ejaculations, etc., seem no more than natural when metre (acting as a key) has attuned and prepared the mind for such effects. The metre raises the tone of colouring so as to introduce richer tints without shocking or harshly jarring upon the presiding key, when without this semi-conscious pitching of the expectations, the sensibility would have been revolted. Hence, for the very earliest stages of society, it will be mere nature that prompts men to metre; it is a mode of inspiration, it is a promise of something

preternatural; and less than preternatural cannot be any possible emergency that should call for a public address. Only great truths could require a man to come forward as a spokesman; he is then a sort of interpreter between God and man.

At first, therefore, it is mere nature which prompts metre. Afterwards, as truth begins to enlarge itself—as truth loses something of its sanctity by descending amongst human details—that mode of exalting it, and of courting attention, is dictated by artifice, which originally was a mere necessity of nature raised above herself. For these reasons, it is certain that men, challenging high authentic character, will continue to speak by metre for many generations after it has ceased to be a mere voice of habitual impulse. Whatsoever claims an oracular authority, will take the ordinary external form of an oracle. And after it has ceased to be a badge of inspiration, metre will be retained as a badge of professional distinction; Pythagoras, for instance, within five centuries of Christ, Thales or Theognis, will adopt metre out of a secondary prudence; Orpheus and the elder Sibyl, out of an original necessity.

Those people are, therefore, mistaken who imagine that prose is either a natural or a possible form of composition in early states of society. It is such truth only as ascends from the earth, not such as descends from heaven, which can ever

assume an unmetrical form. Now, in the earliest states of society, all truth that has any interest or importance for man will connect itself with heaven. If it does not originally come forward in that sacred character, if it does not borrow its importance from its sanctity; then, by an inverse order, it will borrow a sanctity from its importance. Even agricultural truth, even the homeliest truths of rural industry, brought into connexion with religious inspiration, will be exalted (like the common culinary utensils in the great vision of the Jewish prophet) and transfigured into vessels of glorious consecration. All things in this early stage of social man are meant mysteriously, have allegoric values; and week-day man moves amongst glorified objects. So that if any doctrine, principle, or system of truth, should call for communication at all, infallibly the communication will take the tone of a revelation; and the holiness of a revelation will express itself in the most impassioned form, perhaps with accompaniments of music, but certainly with metre.

Prose, therefore, strange as it may seem to say so, was something of a discovery. If not great invention, at least great courage would be required for the man who should first swim without the bladders of metre. It is all very easy talking, when you and your ancestors for fifty generations back have talked prose. But that man must

have had *triplex æs*, about his *præcordia*, who first dared to come forward with pure prose as the vehicle for any impassioned form of truth. Even the first physician who dared to lay aside the ample wig and gold-headed cane needed *extra* courage. All the Jovian terrors of his traditional costume laid aside, he was thrown upon his mere natural resources of skill and good sense. Who was the first lion-hearted man that ventured to make sail in this frail boat of prose? We believe the man's name is reputed to have been Pherecydes. But as nothing is less worth remembering than the mere hollow shell of a name, where all the pulp and the kernel is gone, we shall presume Herodotus to have been the first respectable artist in prose. And what was this worthy man's view of prose? From the way in which he connected his several books or "fyttes" with the names of the muses, and from the romantic style of his narratives, as well as from his using a dialect which had certainly become a poetic dialect in literary Greece, it is pretty clear that Herodotus stood, and meant to stand, on that isthmus between the regions of poetry and blank unimpassioned prose, which in modern literature is occupied by such works as *Mort d'Arthur*. In Thucydides, we see the first exhibition of stern philosophic prose. And, considering the very brief interval between the two writers, who stand

related to each other, in point of time, pretty much as Dryden and Pope, it is quite impossible to look for the solution of their characteristic differences in the mere graduations of social development. Pericles, as a young man, would most certainly ask Herodotus to dinner, if business or curiosity ever drew that amiable writer to Athens. As an elderly man, Pericles must often have seen Thucydides at his levees; although by that time the sacrifice of his "social pleasure ill exchanged for power," may have abridged his opportunity of giving "feeds" to literary men. But will anybody believe that the mere advance of social refinement, within the narrow period of one man's public life, could bring about so marvellous a change, as that the friend of his youth should naturally write very much in the spirit of Sir John Mandeville, and the friend of his old age, like Machiavel or Gibbon? No, no; the difference between these two writers does not reflect the different aspects of literary Greece at two eras so slightly removed, too great to be measured by that scale—as though those of the picturesque Herodotus were a splendid semi-barbarous generation, those of the meditative Thucydides, speculative, political, experimental —but we must look to subjective differences of taste and temperament in the men. The men, by nature, and by powerful determination of original

sensibility, belong to different orders of intellect. Herodotus was the Froissart of antiquity. He was the man that should have lived to record the Crusades. Thucydides, on the other hand, was obviously the Tacitus of Greece, who (had he been privileged to benefit by some metempsychosis dropping him into congenial scenes of modern history) would have made his election for the wars of the French League, or for our Parliamentary war, or for the colossal conflicts which grew out of the French Revolution. The one was the son of nature, fascinated by the mighty powers of chance or of tragic destiny, as they are seen in elder times moulding the form of empires, or training the currents of revolutions. The other was the son of political speculation, delighting to trace the darker agencies which brood in the mind of man—the subtle motives, the combinations, the blots which gather in the brain of "dark viziers," when intrusted with the fate of millions, and the nation-wielding tempests which move at the bidding of the orator.

But these subjective differences were not all; they led to objective differences, by determining each writer's mind to a separate object. Does any man fancy that these two writers imagined, each for himself, the same audience? Or again, that each represented his own audience as addressed from the same station? The earlier of the two,

full of those qualities which fit a man for producing an effect as an artist, manifestly comes forward in a theatrical character, and addresses his audience from a theatrical station. Is it readers whom he courts? No, but auditors. Is it the literary body whom he addresses—a small body everywhere? No, but the public without limitation. Public! but what public? Not the public of Lacedæmon, drunk with the gloomy insolence of self-conceit; not the public of Athens, amiably vain, courteous, affable, refined: No; it is the public of universal Hellas, an august congress representing the total civilisation of the earth; so that of any man not known at Olympia, prince, emperor, whatever he might call himself, if he were not present in person or by proxy, you might warrantably affirm that he was *homo ignorabilis*—a person of whose existence nobody was bound to take notice; a man to be *ignored* by a grand jury. This representative *champ de Mai*, Herodotus addressed. And in what character did he address it? What character did he ascribe to the audience? What character did he assume to himself? Them he addressed sometimes in their general character of human beings; but still having a common interest in a central net-work of civilisation, investing a certain ring-fence, beginning in Sicily and Carthage, whence it ran round through Lybia, Egypt, Syria, Persia, the Ionian

belt or zone, and terminating in the majestic region of *Men*—the home of liberty, the Pharos of truth and intellectual power, the very region in which they were all at that moment assembled. There was such a collective body dimly recognised at times by the ancients, as corresponds to our modern Christendom, and having some unity of possible interest by comparison with the unknown regions of Scythias, Indias, and Ethiopias, lying in a far wider circle beyond—regions that, from their very obscurity, and from the utter darkness of their exterior relations, must at times have been looked to with eyes of anxiety as permanently harbouring that possible deluge of savage eruption which, about one hundred and fifty years after, did actually swallow up the Grecian colony of Bactria (or Bokhara), as founded by Alexander; swallowed it so suddenly and so effectually, that merely the blank fact of its tragical catastrophe has reached posterity. It was surprised probably in one night, like Pompeii by Vesuvius, or like the planet itself by Noah's flood; or more nearly its fate resembled those starry bodies which have been seen, traced, recorded, fixed in longitude and latitude for generations, and then suddenly are observed to be *missing* by some of our wandering telescopes that keep watch and ward over the starry heavens. The agonies of a perishing world have been going on, but all is bright and silent in

the heavenly host. Infinite space has swallowed up the infinite agonies. Perhaps the only record of Bactria was the sullen report of some courier from Susa, who would come back with his letters undelivered, simply reporting that, on reaching such a ferry on some nameless river, or such an outpost upon a heath, he found it in possession of a fierce, unknown race, the ancestors of future Affghans or Tartars.

Such a catastrophe, as menacing by possibility the whole of civilisation, and under that hypothetical peril as giving even to Greece herself an interest in the stability even of Persia, her sole enemy, a great resisting mass interjacent between Greece and the unknown enemies to the far north-east or east, could not but have mixed occasionally with Greek anticipations for the future, and in a degree quite inappreciable by us who know the geographical limits of Asia. To the ancients, these were, by possibility, in a strict sense, infinite. The terror from the unknown Scythians of the world was certainly vague and indistinct; but if that disarmed its terror or broke its sting, assuredly the very same cause would keep it alive, for the peril would often swell upon the eye merely from its uncertain limits. Far oftener, however, those glorious certainties revolved upon the Grecian imagination, which presented Persia in the character of her enemy, than those

remote possibilities which might connect her as a common friend against some horrid enemy from the infinite deserts of Asia. In this character it was, that Herodotus at times addressed the assembled Greece, at whose bar he stood. That the intensity of this patriotic idea intermitted at times; that it was suffered to slumber through entire books; this was but an artist's management which caused it to swell upon the ear all the more sonorously, more clamorously, more terrifically, when the lungs of the organ filled once more with breath, when the trumpet-stop was opened, and the "foudroyant" style of the organist commenced the hailstone chorus from Marathon. Here came out the character in which Herodotus appeared. The *Iliad* had taken Greece as she was during the building of the first temple at Jerusalem — in the era of David and Solomon — a thousand years before Christ. The eagle's plume in her cap at that era was derived from Asia. It was the Troad, it was Asia that in those days constituted the great enemy of Greece. Greece universal had been confederated against the Asia of that day, and, after an Iliad of woes, had triumphed. But now another era of five hundred years has passed since Troy. Again there has been a universal war raging between Greece and a great foreign potentate; again, this enemy of Greece is called Asia. But what Asia? The Asia of the

*Iliad* was a petty maritime Asia. But Asia now means Persia; and Persia, taken in combination with its dependencies of Syria and Egypt, means the world, ἡ οικουμενη. The frontier line of the Persian empire "marched" or confined with the Grecian; but now so vast was the revolution effected by Cyrus, that, had not the Persians been withheld by their dismal bigotry from cultivating maritime facilities, the Greeks must have sunk under the enormous power now brought to bear upon them. At one blow, the whole territory of what is now Turkey in Asia, viz., the whole of Anatolia and of Armenia, had been extinguished as a neutral and interjacent force for Greece. At one blow, by the battle of Thymbra, the Persian armies had been brought nearer by much more than a thousand miles to the gates of Greece.

That danger it is necessary to conceive, in order to conceive that subsequent triumph. Herodotus—whose family and nearest generation of predecessors must have trembled after the thoughtless insult offered to Sardis, under the expectation of the vast revenge prepared by the great king—must have had his young imagination filled and dilated with the enormous display of Oriental power, and been thus prepared to understand the terrific collisions of the Persian forces with those of Greece. He had heard in his travels how the glorious result was appreciated in foreign lands.

He came back to Greece with a twofold freight of treasures. He had two messages for his country. One was a report of all that was wonderful in foreign lands; all that was interesting from its novelty or its vast antiquity; all that was regarded by the natives for its sanctity, or by foreigners with amazement, as a measure of colossal power in mechanics. And these foreign lands, we must remember, constituted the total world to a Greek. Rome was yet in her infant days, unheard of beyond Italy. Egypt and the other dependencies of Persia composed the total map south of Greece. Greece, with the Mediterranean islands, and the eastern side of the Adriatic, together with Macedon and Thrace, made up the world of Europe. Asia, which had not yet received the narrow limitation imposed upon that word by Rome, was co-extensive with Persia; and it might be divided into Asia *cis*-Tigritana, and Asia *trans*-Tigritana; the Euxine and the Caspian were the boundaries to the north; and to one advancing further, the Oxus was the northern boundary, and the Indus the Eastern. The Punjab, as far as the river Sutlege, that is, up to our present British cantonments at Loodiana, was indistinctly supposed to be within the jurisdiction of the Great King. Probably he held the whole intervening territory of the late Runjeet Sing, as now possessed by the Sikhs. And beyond these limits all was a mere

zodiac of visionary splendour, or a dull repetition of monotonous barbarism.

The report which personal travels enabled Herodotus to make of this extensive region, composing neither more nor less than the total map of the terraqueous globe as it was then supposed to exist (all the rest being a mere Nova Zembla in their eyes), was one of two revelations which the great traveller had to lay at the feet of Greece. The other was a connected narrative of their great struggle with the King of Persia. The earth bisected itself into two parts—Persia and Greece. All that was not Persia was Greece: all that was not Greece was Persia. The Greek traveller was prepared to describe the one section to the other section; and having done this, to relate in a connected shape the recent tremendous struggle of the one section with the other. Here was Captain Cook, fresh from his triple circumnavigation of the world: here was Mungo Park fresh from the Niger and Timbuctoo: here was Bruce fresh from the coy fountains of the Nile: here was Phipps, Franklin, Parry, from the Arctic circle: here was Leo Africanus from Moorish palaces: here was Mandeville from Prester John, and from the Cham of Tartary, and

"From Agra and Lahore of Great Mogul."

This was one side of the medal; and on the other

was the patriotic historian who recorded what all had heard by fractions, but none in a continuous series. Now, if we consider how rare was either character in ancient times, how difficult it was to travel where no passport made it safe, where no preparations in roads, inns, carriages, made it convenient; that even five centuries in advance of this era, little knowledge was generally circulated of any region, unless so far as it had been traversed by the Roman legions; considering the vast credulity of the audience assembled, a gulf capable of swallowing mountains; and, on the other hand, that here was a man fresh from the Pyramids and the Nile, from Tyre, from Babylon and the temple of Belus, a traveller who had gone in with his sickle to a harvest yet untouched; that this same man, considered as a historian, spoke of a struggle with which the earth was still agitated; that the people who had triumphed so memorably in this war, happened to be the same people who were then listening; that the leaders in this glorious war, whose names had already passed into spiritual powers, were the fathers of the present audience; combining into one picture all these circumstances, one must admit that no such meeting between giddy expectation, and the very excess of power to meet its most clamorous calls, is likely to have occurred before or since upon this earth. Hither had assembled people from the

most inland and most illiterate parts of Greece; people that would have settled a pension for life upon any man who would have described to them so much as a crocodile or ichneumon. To these people, the year of his public recitation would be the meridian year of their lives. He saw that the whole scene would become almost a dramatic work of art; in the mere gratification of their curiosity, the audience might be passive and neutral; but in the history of the war, they became almost actors, as in a dramatic scene. This scenical position could not escape the traveller-historian. His work was recited with the exaggeration that belongs to scenic art. It was read probably with gesticulations by one of those thundering voices, which Aristophanes calls a "damnable" voice, from its ear-piercing violence.

*Prose* is a thing so well known to all of us, most of our "little accounts" from shoemakers, dressmakers, &c., being made out in prose; most of our sorrows and of our joys having been communicated to us through prose, and very few indeed through metre (unless on St. Valentine's day), that its further history, after leaving its original Olympic cradle, must be interesting to everybody. Who were they that next took up the literary use of Prose? Confining our notice to people of celebrity, we may say that the House of Socrates (*Domus Socratica* is the expression of

Horace), were those who next attempted to popularize Greek prose; viz., the old gentleman himself, the founder of the concern, and his two apprentices, Plato and Xenophon. We acknowledge a sneaking hatred towards the whole household, founded chiefly on the intense feeling we entertain that all three were humbugs. We own the stony impeachment. Aristotle, who may be looked upon as literary grandson to Socrates, is quite a different person. But for the rest we cherish a sentimental (may we call it a Platonic?) disgust. As relates to the style, however, in which they have communicated their philosophy, one feature of peculiarity is too remarkable to pass without comment. Some years ago, in one of our four or five Quarterly Reviews (*Theological* it was, *Foreign*, or else *Westminster*), a critical opinion was delivered with respect to a work of Coleridge's, which opens a glimpse into the true philosophy of prose composition. It was not a very good-natured opinion in that situation, since it was no more true of Coleridge than it is of every other man who adopts the same aphoristic form of expression for his thoughts; but it was eminently just. Speaking of Coleridge's "Aphorisms," the reviewer observed, that this detached and insulated form of delivering thoughts was, in effect, an evasion of all the difficulties connected with composition. Every man, as he walks through the streets, may con-

trive to jot down an independent thought; a short-hand memorandum of a great truth. So far as that purpose is concerned, even in tumultuous London,

"Puræ sunt plateæ, nihil ut meditantibus obstet."

Standing on one leg you may accomplish this. The labour of composition begins when you have to put your separate threads of thought into a loom; to weave them into a continuous whole; to connect, to introduce them; to blow them out or expand them; to carry them to a close. All this evil is evaded by the aphoristic form. This one remark, we repeat, lifts up a corner of that curtain which hangs over the difficult subjects of style and composition. Indicating what is *not* in one form, it points to what *is* in others. It was an original remark, we doubt not, to the reviewer. But it is too weighty and just to have escaped meditative men in former times; and accordingly the very same remark will be found 150 years ago expanded in the *Huetiana*.

But what relation has this remark to the House of Socrates? Did *they* write by aphorisms? No, certainly; but they did what labours with the same radical defect, considered in relation to the true difficulties of composition. Let us dedicate a paragraph to these great dons of literature. If we have any merely English scholars amongst our readers, it may be requisite first to inform them that Socrates himself wrote nothing. He

was too much occupied with his talking — "ambitiosâ loquelâ." In this respect Socrates differed, as in some others that we could mention, from the late Mr. Coleridge, who found time both for talking and for writing at the least 25 volumes octavo. From the pupils of Socrates it is that we collect his pretended philosophy; and as there were only two of these pupils who published, and as one of them intensely contradicts the other, it would be found a hard matter at *Nisi Prius* to extract any verdict as to what it was that constituted the true staple of the Socratic philosophy. We fear that any jury, who undertook that question, would finally be carted to the bounds of the county, and shot into the adjacent county like a ton of coals. For Xenophon uniformly introduces the worthy hen-pecked philosopher as prattling innocent nothings, more limpid than small beer; whilst Plato never lets him condescend to any theme less remote from humanity than those of Hermes Trismegistus. One or other must be a liar. And the manner of the philosopher, under these two Boswellian reporters, is not less different than his matter: with Xenophon, he reminds us much of an elderly hen, superannuated a little, pirouetting to "the hen's march," and clucking vociferously; with Plato, he seems much like a deep-mouthed hound in a chase after some unknown but perilous game;

much as such a hound is described by Wordsworth, ranging over the aerial heights of Mount Righi, his voice at times muffled by mighty forests, and then again swelling as he emerges upon the Alpine breezes; whilst the vast intervals between the local points from which the intermitting voice ascends, proclaim the storm pace at which he travels. In Plato, there is a gloomy grandeur at times from the elementary mysteries of man's situation and origin, snatches of music from some older and Orphic philosophy, which impress a vague feeling of solemnity towards the patriarch of the school, though you can seldom trace *his* movement through all this high and vapoury region; you would be happy, therefore, to believe that there had been one word of truth in ascribing such colloquies to Socrates; but how that can be, when you recollect the philosophic *vappa* of Xenophon, seems to pass the deciphering power of Œdipus.

Now, this body of inexplicable discord between the two evangelists of Socrates, as to the whole sources from which he drew his philosophy, as to the very wells from which he raised it, and the mode of medicating the draught, makes it the more worthy of remark, that both should have obstinately adopted the same disagreeable form of composition. Both exhibit the whole of their separate speculations under the form of dialogue. It is always Socrates and Crito, or. Socrates and

Phædrus, or Socrates and Ischomachus; in fact, Socrates and some man of straw or good-humoured nine-pin set up to be bowled down as a matter of course. How inevitably the reader feels his fingers itching, to take up the cudgels instead of Crito for one ten minutes! Had *we* been favoured with an interview, we can answer for it that the philosopher should not have had it all his own way; there should have been a "scratch" at least between us; and instead of waiting to see Crito punished without delivering one blow that would "have made a dent in a pound of butter," posterity should have formed a ring about us, crying out—"Pull baker; pull devil"—according as the accidents of the struggle went this way or that. If dialogue must be the form, at least it should not have been collusive dialogue. Whereas, with Crito and the rest of the men who were in training for the part of disputants, it was a matter of notoriety, that, if they presumed to put in a sly thrust under the ribs of the philosopher, the Socratic partisans, *οἱ αμφι τον Σωκρατην*, would kick them into the kennel. It was a permanent "cross" that was fought throughout life between Socrates and his obsequious antagonists.

As Plato and Xenophon must have hated each other with a theological hatred, it is a clear case that they would not have harmonized in anything

if they had supposed it open to evasion. They would have got another atmosphere had it been possible. Diverging from each other in all points beside, beyond doubt they would have diverged as to this form of dialogue, had they not conceived that it was essential to the business of philosophy. It is plain from this one fact, how narrow was the range of conception which the Socratic school applied to the possible modes of dealing with polemic truth. They represented the case thus:—Truth, they fancied, offered itself by separate units, by moments (to borrow a word from dynamics), by what Cicero calls "apices rerum" and "punctiunculæ." Each of these must be separately examined. It was like the *items* in a disputed account. There must be an auditor to check and revise each severally for itself. This process of auditing could only be carried on through a brisk dialogue. The philosopher in monologue was like a champion at a tournament with nobody to face him. He was a chess-player with no opponent. The game could not proceed. But how mean and limited a conception this was, which lay as a basis for the whole Socratic philosophy, becomes apparent to any man who considers any ample body of truth, whether polemic truth or not, in all its proportions. Yet, in all this, we repeat, the Socratic weakness is not adequately exposed. There is a

far larger and subtler class of cases where the arguments for and against are not susceptible of this separate valuation. One is valid only through and by a second, which second again is involved in a third; and so on. Thus by way of a brief instance, take all the systems of political economy which have grown up since Turgot and Quesnel. They are all polemic; that is, all have moulded themselves in hostility to some other systems; all had their birth in opposition. But it would be impossible to proceed Socratically with any one of them. If you should attempt to examine Ricardo sentence by sentence, or even chapter by chapter, his apologist would loudly resist such a process as inapplicable. You must *hold on;* you must keep fast hold of certain principles until you have time to catch hold of certain others—seven or eight, suppose; and then from the whole taken in continuation, but not from any one as an insulated principle, you come into a power of adjudicating upon the pretensions of the whole theory. The doctrine of value, for example, could you understand that taken apart? could you value it apart? As a Socratic logician, could you say of it either *affirmatur* or *negatur*, until you see it coming round and revolving in the doctrines of rent, profits, machinery, etc., which are so many functions of value; and which doctrines first react with a weight of verification upon the other?

These, unless parried, are knock-down blows to the Socratic, and therefore to the Platonic philosophy, if treated as a *modus philosophandi*; and if that philosophy is treated as a body of doctrines apart from any *modus* or *ratio docendi*, we should be glad to hear what they are, for we never could find any whatever in Plato or Xenophon which are insisted on as essential. Accidental hints and casual suggestions cannot be viewed as doctrines in that sense which is necessary to establish a separate school. And all the German Tiedemanns and Tennemanns, the tedious men and the tenpenny-men, that have written their twelve or their eighteen volumes *viritim* upon Plato, will find it hard to satisfy their readers unless they make head against these little objections, because these objections seem to impeach the very *method* of the "Socratiæ Chartæ;" and except as the authors or illustrators of a method, the Socratici are no school at all.

But are not we travelling a little out of our proper field in attacking this method? Our business was with this method considered as a *form of style*, not considered as a *form of logic*. True, O rigorous reader! Yet digressions and moderate excursions have a license. Besides which, on strict consideration, doubts arise whether we *have* been digressing; for whatsoever acted as a power on Greek prose, through many

ages, whatsoever gave it a bias towards any one characteristic excess, becomes important in virtue of its relations to our subject. Now, the form of dialogue so obstinately maintained by the earliest philosophers, who used prose as the vehicle of their teaching, had the unhappy effect of impressing from the earliest era of Attic literature a colloquial taint upon the prose literature of that country. The great authority of Socrates, maintained for ages by the windiest of fables, naturally did much to strengthen this original twist in the prose style. About fifty years after the death of Socrates, the writings of Aristotle were beginning to occupy the attention of Greece, and in them we see as resolute a departure from the dialogue form as in his elders of the same house the adherence to that form had been servile and bigoted. His style, though arid from causes that will hereafter be noticed, was much more dignified, or at least more grave and suitable to philosophic speculation than that of any man before him. Contemporary with the early life of Socrates was a truly great man, Anaxagoras, the friend and reputed preceptor of Pericles. It is probable he may have written in the style of Aristotle. Having great systematic truths to teach, such as solved existing phenomena, and not such as raised fresh phenomena for future solution, he would naturally adopt the form of continuous ex-

position. Nor do we at this moment remember a case of any very great man who had any real and novel truth to communicate, having adopted the form of dialogue, excepting only the case of Galileo. Plato, indeed, is *reputed*, and Galileo is known to have exacted geometry as a qualification in his students; that is, in those who paid him a διδακτρον, or fee, for the privilege of personally attending his conversations; but he demanded no such qualification in his readers, or else we can assure him that very few copies of his *Opera Omnia* would have been sold in Athens. This low qualification it was for the readers of Plato, and still more for those of Xenophon, which operated to diffuse the reputation of Socrates. Besides, it was a rare thing in Greece to see two men sounding the trumpet on behalf of a third; and we hope it is not ungenerous to suspect, that each dallied with the same purpose as our Chatterton and Macpherson, viz., to turn round on the public when once committed and compromised by some unequivocal applause, saying, "Gentlemen of Athens, this idol Socrates is a phantom of my brain; as respects the philosophy ascribed to him, I am Socrates:" or, as Handel (who, in consideration of his own preternatural appetite, had ordered dinner for six) said to the astonished waiter when pleading as his excuse for not bringing up the dishes, that he

waited for the company,—"Yong man, *I* am de Gombany."

But in what mode does the conversational taint, which we trace to the writings of the Socratici, enforced by the imaginary martyrdom of Socrates, express itself? In what forms of language? By what peculiarities? By what defects of style; We will endeavour to explain. One of the Scaligers (if we remember, it was the elder), speaking of the Greek article *ὁ, ἡ, τo,* called it *loquacissimæ gentis flabellum.* Now, *pace superbissimi viri,* this seems nonsense, because the use of the article was not capricious, but grounded on the very structure and necessities of the Greek language. Garrulous or not, the poor men were obliged, by the philosophy of their tongue, to use the article in certain situations; and, to say the truth, these situations were very much the same as in English. Allowing for a few cases of proper names, participles, or adjectives postponed to their substantives, etc., the two general functions of the article definite, equally in Greek and in English are: 1*st*, to individualize, as, *e.g.*, "It is not any sword that will do, I will have *the* sword of my father;" and, 2*nd*, the very opposite function, viz., to generalize in the highest degree—a use which our best English grammars wholly overlook—as, *e.g.*, "Let *the* sword give way to *the* gown;" not that particular sword, but every sword, where

each is used as a representative symbol of the corresponding professions. "*The* peasant presses on the kibes *of the* courtier," where the class is indicated by the individual. In speaking again of diseases, and the organs affected, we usually accomplish this generalization by means of the definite article. We say, "He suffered from *a* headache;" but also we say, "from *the* headache;" and invariably we say, "He died of *the* stone," etc. And though we fancy it a peculiarity of the French language to say, "*Le* cœur lui était navré de douleur," yet we ourselves say, "The heart was affected in his case." In all these uses of the definite article, there is little real difference between the Greek language and our own. The main difference is in the negative use; in the meaning implied by the absence of the article, which, with the Greeks, expresses our article *a*, but with us is a form of generalization. In all this there was nothing left free to the choice; and Scaliger had no right to find any illustration of Greek levity in what was unavoidable.

But what *we* tax as undignified in the Greek prose style, as a badge of garrulity, as a taint from which the Greek prose never cleansed itself, are all those forms of lively colloquialism, with the fretfulness and hurry and demonstrative energy of people unduly excited by bodily presence and by ocular appeals to their sensibility. Such a

style is picturesque no doubt; so is the Scottish dialect of low life as first employed in novels by Sir Walter Scott; that dialect greatly assisted the characteristic expression; it furnished the benefit of a Doric dialect; but what man in his senses would employ it in a grave work and speaking in his own person? Now the colloquial expletives so profusely employed by Plato, more than anybody, the forms of his sentences, the forms of his transitions, and other intense peculiarities of the chattering man, as opposed to the meditating man, have crept over the face of Greek literature; and though some people think everything holy which is printed in Greek characters, we must be allowed to rank these forms of expression as mere vulgarities. Sometimes in Westmoreland, if you chance to meet an ancient father of his valley, one who is thoroughly vernacular in his talk, being unsinged by the modern furnace of revolution, you may have a fancy for asking him how far it is to the next town. In which case you will receive for answer pretty nearly the following words:—"Why like, it's gaily nigh like to four mile like." Now if the pruriency of your curiosity should carry you to torment and vex this aged man, by pressing a special investigation into this word *like*, the only result is likely to be that you will kill *him*, and do yourself no good. Call it an expletive, indeed! a filling up! Why to him it is

the only indispensable part of the sentence; the sole fixture. It is the balustrade which enables him to descend the stairs of conversation without falling overboard; and if the word were proscribed by Parliament, he would have no resource but in everlasting silence. Now the expletives of Plato are as gross, and must have been to the Athenian as unintelligible as those of the Westmoreland peasant. It is true the value, the effect to the feelings, was secured by daily use and by the position in the sentence. But so it is to the English peasant. *Like* in his use is a modifying, a restraining particle, which forbids you to understand anything in a dangerous unconditional sense. But then again the Greek particle of transition, that eternal δε, and the introductory formula of μεν and δε, however earnestly people may fight for them, because Greek is now past mending,—in fact the δε is strictly equivalent to the *whereby* of a sailor; "whereby I went to London; whereby I was robbed; whereby I found the man that robbed me." All relations, all modes of succession or transition, are indicated by one and the same particle. This could arise, even as a license, only in the laxity of conversation. But the most offensive indication of the conversational spirit, as *presiding* in Greek prose, is to be found in the morbid energy of oaths scattered over the face of every prose composition which aims at

rhetorical effect. The literature is deformed with a constant roulade of "by Jove," "by Minerva," etc., as much as the conversation of high-bred Englishmen in the reign of Charles II. In both cases this habit belonged to a state of transition; and if the prose literature of Greece had been cultivated by a succession of authors as extended as that of England, it would certainly have outworn this badge of spurious energy. That it did not is a proof that the Greek literature never reached the consummation of art.

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## PART III.

Reader, you are beginning to suspect us. "How long do we purpose to detain people?" For anything that appears we may be designing to write on to the twentieth century, for twice thirty years. "And *whither* are we going?" Towards what object? which is as urgent a quære as *how far*. Perhaps we may be leading you into treason, or (which indeed is pretty much the same thing) we may be paving the way to "Repeal." You feel symptoms of doubt and restiveness; and like Hamlet with his father's ghost, you will follow us no further unless we explain what it is that we are in quest of.

Our course then for the rest of our progress, the outline of our method, will pursue the following objects. We shall detain you a little longer on the Grecian prose literature; and we shall pursue that literature within the gates of Latium. What was the Grecian idea of *style*, what the Roman, will appear as a deduction from this review. With respect to the Greeks, we shall endeavour to show that they had not arrived at a full expanded consciousness of the separate idea expressed by *style;* and in order to account for this failure we shall point out the deflexion, the bias, which was impressed upon the Greek speculations in this particular, by the tendency of their civil life. *That* was made important in the eyes of the speculative critic which was indispensable for the actual practitioner; *that* was indispensable for the actual practitioner which was exacted by the course of public ambition. The political aspirant, who needed a command of fluent eloquence, sought for so much knowledge (and no more) as promised to be available in his own particular mode of competition. The speculative critic or professional master of rhetoric offered just so much information (and no more) as was likely to be sought by his clients. Each alike cultivated no more than experience showed him would be demanded. But in Rome, and for a reason perhaps which will appear worth pausing upon, a

subtler conception of style was formed, though still far from being perfectly developed. The Romans, whether worse orators or not than the Grecians, were certainly better rhetoricians. And Cicero, the mighty master of language for the Pagan world, whom we shall summon as our witness, will satisfy us that, in this research at least, the Roman intellect was more searching, and pressed nearer to the undiscovered truth than the Grecian.

From a particular passage in the *De Oratore*, which will be cited for the general purpose here indicated of proving a closer approximation on the part of Roman thinkers than had previously been made to the very heart of this difficult subject, we shall take occasion to make a still nearer approach for ourselves. We shall endeavour to bring up our reader to the fence, and persuade him, if possible, to take the leap which still remains to be taken in this field of style. But as we have reason to fear that he will "refuse" it, we shall wheel him round and bring him up to it from another quarter. A gentle touch of the spur may then perhaps carry him over. Let not the reader take it to heart, that we here represent him under the figure of a horse, and ourselves in a nobler character as riding him, and that we even take the liberty of proposing to spur him. Anything may be borne in metaphor. Figuratively, one may kick a man without offence.

There are no limits to allegoric patience. But no matter who takes the leap, or how, a leap there is which must be taken in the course of these speculations on style, before the ground will be open for absolute advance. Every man who has studied and meditated the difficulties of style, must have had a sub-conscious sense of a bar in his way at a particular point of the road thwarting his free movement; he could not have evaded such a sense but by benefit of extreme shallowness. That bar which we shall indicate must be cleared away, thrown down, or surmounted. And then the prospect will lie open to a new map, and a perfect map of the whole region. It will then become possible for the first time to overlook the whole geography of the adjacencies. An entire theory of the difficulties being before the student, it will at length be possible to aid his efforts by ample *practical* suggestions. Of these we shall ourselves offer the very plainest, viz., those which apply to the mechanology of style. For these there will be an easy opening; they will not go beyond the reasonable limits disposable for a single subject in a literary journal. As to the rest, which would (Germanly speaking) require a "strong" octavo for their full exposition, we shall hold ourselves to have done enough in fulfilling the large promise we have made—the promise of marking out for subsequent cultivation and

development all the possible subdivisions and sections amongst the resources of the rhetorician; all the powers which he can employ, and therefore all the difficulties which he needs to study; the arts by which he can profit, and, in correspondence with them, the obstacles by which he will be resisted. Were this done we should no longer see those incoherent sketches which are now circulating in the world upon questions of taste, of science, of practical address, as applied to the management of style and rhetoric; the public ear would no longer be occupied by feeble Frenchmen—Rollin, Rapin, Batteux, Bonhours, Du Bos, and *id genus omne*; nor by the elegant but desultory Blair; nor by scores of others who bring an occasional acuteness or casual information to this or that subsection of their duty, whilst (taken as general guides) they are universally insufficient. No; but the business of rhetoric, the management of our mother-tongue in all offices to which it can be applied, would become as much a matter of systematic art, as regular a subject for training and mechanic discipline, as the science of discrete quantity in arithmetic, or of continuous quantity in Geometry. But will not that be likely to impress a character of mechanic monotony upon style like the miserable attempts at reforming handwriting? Look at them, touch them, or, if you are afraid of soiling

your fingers, hold them up with the tongs; they reduce all characteristic varieties of writing to one form of blank identity, and *that* the very vilest form of scribbling which exists in Europe, viz., to the wooden scratch (as if traced with a skewer) universally prevailing amongst French people. Vainly would Aldorisius apply his famous art (viz., the art of deciphering a man's character from handwriting) to the villanous scrawls which issue from this modern laboratory of pseudo-caligraphy. All pupils under *these* systems write alike; the predestined thief is confounded with the patriot or martyr; the innocent young girl with the old hag that watches country waggons for victims. In the same indistinguishable character, so far as this reforming process is concerned, would Joseph Hume sign a motion for retrenching three half-crowns per annum from the orphan daughter of a man who had died in battle, and Queen Adelaide write a subscription towards a fresh church for carrying on war, from generation to generation, upon sin and misery.

Now if a mechanic system of training for style would have the same levelling effects as these false caligraphies, better by far that we should retain our old ignorance. If art is to terminate in a killing monotony, welcome the old condition of inartificial simplicity! So say you, reader; ay, but so say we. This does not touch *us:* the

mechanism *we* speak of will apply to no meritorious qualities of style, but to its faults, and, above all, to its awkwardness; in fact, to all that now constitutes the *friction* of style, the needless joltings and retardations of our fluent motion. As to the motion itself in all that is positive in its derivation, in its exciting impulses, in its speed, and its characteristic varieties, it will remain unaffected. The modes of human feeling are inexhaustible; the forms by which feeling connects itself with thought are indefeasibly natural; the channels through which both impress themselves upon language are infinite. All these are imperturbable by human art; they are past the reach of mechanism; you might as well be afraid that some steam-engine—Atlas, suppose, or Samson (whom the Germans call Simpson)—should perfidiously hook himself to the earth's axis, and and run away with us to Jupiter. Let Simpson do his worst; we defy him. And so of style; in that sense, under which we all have an interest in its free movements, it will for ever remain free. It will defy art to control it. In that sense under which it ever *can* be mechanized, we have all an interest in wishing that it should be so. Our final object therefore is a meritorious one, with no intermixture of evil. This being explained, and our course onwards having been mapped out, let us now proceed with our work, first recapitu-

lating in direct juxtaposition with each other the points of our future movement:—

1. Greek and Latin literature we shall touch on only for the sake of appraising or deducing the sort of ideas which they had upon the subject of style. It will appear that these ideas were insufficient. At the best they were tentative. 2. From them, however, may be derived a hint, a dim suggestion, of the true question in arrear; and, universally, that goes a great way towards the true answer. "*Dimidium facti*," says the Roman proverb, "*qui benè cœpit, habet.*" To have made a good beginning is one half of the work. *Prudens interrogatio*, says a wise modern, to have shaped your question skilfully, is, in that sense, and with a view to the answer, a good beginning. 3. Having laid this foundation towards an answer, we shall then attempt the answer itself. 4. After which, that is, after removing to the best of our power such difficulties to the *higher understanding* as beset the subject of style, rhetoric, composition, having (if we do not greatly delude ourselves) removed the one great bar to a right theory of style, or a practical discipline of style, we shall leave to some future work of more suitable dimensions the filling up of our outline. Ourselves we shall confine to such instant suggestions—practical, popular, broadly intelligible, as require no extensive preparation to introduce them on the author's

part; no serious effort to understand them on the reader's. Whatever is more than this will better suit with the variable and elastic proportions of a separate book, than with the more rigid proportions of a miscellaneous journal.

Coming back, then, for hasty purposes, to Greek literature, we wish to direct the reader's eye upon a remarkable phenomenon in the history of that literature, and subsequently of all human genius; not *so* remarkable, but that multitudes must have noticed it, and yet remarkable enough to task a man's ingenuity in accounting for it. The earliest known occasion on which this phenomenon drew a direct and strong gaze upon itself, was in a little historical sketch composed by a Roman officer during the very opening era of Christianity. We speak of the *Historia Romana*, written and published about the very year of the crucifixion by Velleius Paterculus, in the court of Tiberius Cæsar, the introdution to which presents us with a very interesting outline of general history. The style is sometimes clumsy and unwieldly, but nervous, masculine, and such as became a soldier. In higher qualities, in thoughtfulness, and the spirit of finer observation, it is far beyond the standard of a mere soldier; and it shows, in common with many other indications lying on the face of Roman society at that era, how profoundly the great struggles that had

recently convulsed the world must have terminated in that effect which followed in the wake of the French Revolution; viz., in a vast stimulation to the meditative faculties of man. The agitation, the frenzy, the sorrow of the times, reacted upon the human intellect, and forced men into meditation. Their own nature was held up before them in a sterner form. They were compelled to contemplate an ideal of man, far more colossal than is brought forward in the tranquil aspects of society; and they were often engaged, whether they would or not, with the elementary problems of social philosophy. Mere danger forced a man into thoughts which else were foreign to his habits. Mere necessity of action forced him to decide. Such changes went along with the Reformation; such changes went along with the French Revolution; such changes went along with the great recasting of Roman society under the two earliest Cæsars. In every page of Paterculus we read the swell and agitation of waters subsiding from a deluge. Though a small book, it is tumid with revolutionary life. And something also is due, no doubt, to the example of the mighty leader in the Roman Revolution, to the intellectual and literary tastes diffused by him—

"The foremost man of all this world,"

who had first shown the possibility of uniting the

military leader's truncheon with the most brilliant *stylus* of the rhetorician. How wonderful and pleasing to find such accomplishments of accurate knowledge, comprehensive reading, and study, combined with so searching an intellect, in a man situated as Paterculus, reared amongst camps, amidst the hurry of forced marches, and under the privations of solitary outposts. The old race of hirsute centurions how changed! how perfectly regenerated by the influence of three Cæsars in succession applying a paternal encouragement to literature!

Admiring this man so much, we have paused to review the position in which he stood. Now, recurring to that remark (amongst so many original remarks) by which, in particular, he connects himself with our subject, we may venture to say, that, if it was a very just remark for *his* experience, it is far more so for ours. What he remarked, what he founded upon a review of two nations and two literatures, we may now countersign by an experience of eight or nine. His remark was upon the tendency of intellectual power to gather in clusters; its unaccountable propensity (he thought it such) to form into separate insulated groups. This tendency he illustrates first in two cases of Grecian literature. Perhaps that might have been an insufficient basis for a general theory. But it occurred to Pater-

culus, in confirmation of his doctrine, that the very same tendency had reappeared in his native literature. The same phenomenon had manifested itself, and more than once, in the history of Roman intellect; the same strong *nisus* of great wits to gather and crystallize about a common nucleus. That marked gregariousness in human genius had taken place amongst the poets and orators of Rome, which had previously taken place amongst the poets, orators, and artists of Greece. What importance was attached by Paterculus to this interesting remark, what stress he laid upon its appreciation by the reader, is evident from the emphatic manner in which he introduces it, as well as from the conscious disturbance of the symmetry which he incurs rather than suppress it. These are his words:—"Notwithstanding that this section of my work has considerably outrun the proportions of that model which I had laid down for my guidance, and although perfectly aware that, in circumstances of hurry so unrelenting, which like a revolving wheel or the eddy of rapid waters, allows me no respite or pause, I am summoned rather to omit what is necessary than to court what is redundant; still, I cannot prevail on myself to forbear from uttering and giving a pointed expression to a thought which I have often revolved in my mind, but to this hour have not been able satisfactorily to

account for in theory: (*nequeo tamen temperare mihi quin rem sæpe agitatam animo meo, neque ad liquidum ratione perductam, signem stylo*)." Having thus bespoke the reader's special attention, the writer goes on to ask if any man can sufficiently wonder on observing that eminent genius, in almost every mode of its development (*eminentissima cujusque professionis ingenia*), had gathered itself into the same narrow ring-fence of a single generation. Intellects that in each several department of genius were capable of distinguished execution (*cujusque clari operis capacia ingenia*), had sequestrated themselves from the great stream and succession of their fellow-men into a close insulated community of time, and into a corresponding stage of proficiency measured on their several scales of merit* (*in similitudinem et temporum*

* Paterculus, it must be remembered, was composing a peculiar form of history, and, therefore, under a peculiar law of composition. It was designed for a rapid survey of many ages within a very narrow compass, and unavoidably pitched its scale of abstraction very high. This justified a rhetorical, almost a poetic, form of expression; for in such a mode of writing, whether a writer seeks that effect or not, the abrupt and almost lyrical transitions, the startling leaps over vast gulfs of time and action, already have the effect of impassioned composition. Hence, by an instinct, he becomes rhetorical: and the natural character of his rhetoric, its pointed condensation, often makes him obscure at first sight. We, therefore, for the merely English reader, have a little expanded or at least brought out his meaning. But for the Latin reader, who will enjoy his elliptical energy, we have sometimes added the original words.

*et profectuum semetipsa ab aliis separaverunt*). Without giving *all* the exemplifications by which Paterculus has supported this thesis, we shall cite two: *Una* (*neque multorum annorum spatio divisa*) *ætas per divini spiritûs viros, Æschylum, Sophoclem, Euripidem, illustravit Tragœdiam.* Not that this trinity of poets was *so* contemporary as brothers are; but they were contemporary as youthful uncles in relation to elderly nephews: Æschylus was viewed as a senior by Sophocles, Sophocles by Euripides; but all might by possibility have met together (what a constellation!) at the same table. Again, says Paterculus, *Quid ante Isocratem, quid post ejus auditores, clarum in oratoribus fuit?* Nothing of any distinction in oratory *before* Isocrates, nothing *after* his personal audience. So confined was that orbit within which the perfection of Greek tragedy, within which the perfection of Greek eloquence revolved. The same law, the same strong tendency, he insists, is illustrated in the different schools of Greek comedy; and again of Greek philosophy. Nay, it is more extensively illustrated amongst Greek artists in general: "*Hoc idem evenisse grammaticis, plastis, pictoribus, scalptoribus, quisquis temporum instituerit notis—reperiet.*"

From Greece Paterculus translates the question to his own country in the following pointed manner: summing up the whole doctrine, and

re-affirming it in a form almost startling and questionable by its rigour: "*Adeo artatum angustiis temporum*," so punctually concentrated was all merit within the closest limits of time, "*ut nemo memoriâ dignus, alter ab altero videri nequiverint:*" no man of any consideration but he might have had ocular cognisance of all others in his own field who attained to distinction. He adds: "*Neque hoc in Græcis quam in Romanis evenit magis.*"

His illustrations from the Roman literature we do not mean to follow: one only, as requisite for our purpose, we cite:—"*Oratio, ac vis forensis, perfectumquæ prosæ eloquentiæ decus (pace P. Crassi et Gracchorum dixerim) ita universa sub principe operis sui erupit Tullio, ut mirari neminem possis nisi aut ab illo visum, aut qui illum viderit.*" This is said with epigrammatic point: the perfection of prose, and the brilliancy of style as an artificial accomplishment, was so identified with Cicero's generation, that no distinguished artist, none whom you could greatly admire, but might be called his contemporary; none so much his senior, but Cicero might have seen *him;* none so much his junior, but *he* might have seen Cicero. It is true that Crassus, in Cicero's infancy, and the two Gracchi, in the infancy of Crassus (neither of whom, therefore, could have been seen by Cicero), were memorably potent as orators; in fact, for

tragical results to themselves (which, by the way, was the universal destiny of great *Roman* orators); and nobody was more sensible of their majestic pretensions, merely as orators, than Cicero himself, who has accordingly made Crassus and Antony predominant speakers in his splendid dialogues *De Oratore*. But they were merely demoniac powers, not artists. And with respect to these early orators (as also with respect to some others, whose names we have omitted), Paterculus has made a special reservation. So that he had not at all overlooked the claims of these great men; but he did not feel that any real exception to his general law was created by orators, who were indeed wild organs of party rage or popular frenzy, but who wilfully disdained to connect themselves with the refinements of literature. Such orators did not regard themselves as intellectual, but as political powers. Confining himself to oratory, and to the perfection of prose composition, written or spoken, in the sense of great literary accomplishments, beginning in natural power but perfected by art, Paterculus stands to his assertion, that this mode of human genius had so crowded its development within the brief circuit of Cicero's life (threescore years and three), as that the total series of Roman orators formed a sort of circle, centering in that supreme orator's person, such as, in Modern times, we

might call an electrical circle; each link of the chain having been either electrified by Cicero, or having electrified *him*. Seneca, with great modesty, repeats the very same assertion in other words: "*Quicquid Romana facundia habuit, quod insolenti Græciæ aut opponat aut preferat, circa Ciceronem efflоruit.*" A most ingenuous and self-forgetting homage in him; for a nobler master of thinking than himself, Paganism has not to show, nor, when the cant of criticism has done its worst, a more brilliant master of composition. And were his rule construed literally, it would exclude the two Plinys, the two Senecas, Tacitus, Quinctilian, and others, from the matricula of Roman eloquence. Not one of these men could have seen Cicero; all were divided by more than one generation; and yet, most unquestionably, though all were too reasonable to have fancied themselves any match for the almighty orator in public speaking, yet not one but was an equally accomplished artist in written composition, and under a law of artificial style far more difficult to manage.

However, with the proper allowances for too unmodified a form of expression, we must allow that the singular phenomenon first noticed by Paterculus, as connecting itself with the manifestations of human genius, is sufficiently established by so much of human history as even he had

witnessed. For, if it should be alleged that political changes accounted for the extinction of oral eloquence, concurrently with the death of Cicero, still there are cases more than enough even in the poetry of both Greece and Rome, to say nothing of the arts, which bear out the general fact of human genius coming forward by insulated groups and clusters; or if Pagan ages had left that point doubtful, we have since witnessed Christian repetitions of the truth on the very widest scale. The Italian age of Leo X. in the fifteenth century, the French age of Louis XIV. in the seventeenth century, the German age, commencing with Kant, Wieland, Goethe, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all illustrate the tendency to these intermitting paroxysms of intellectual energy. The lightning and the storm seem to have made the circuit of the whole European heavens, to have formed vortices successively in every civilized land, and to have discharged themselves by turns from every quarter of the atmosphere. In our own country there have been three such gatherings of intellectual power:—1*st*, The age of Shakspere, Spenser, and the great school of dramatists that were already dying out in the latter days of Ben Jonson (1636), and were finally extinguished by the great civil commotions beginning in 1642; 2*dly*, The age of Queen Anne and George I.; 3*dly*, The age commencing with

Cowper, partially roused perhaps by the American war, and afterwards so powerfully stimulated (as was the corresponding era of Kant and Wieland) by the French Revolution. This last volcanic eruption of the British genius has displayed enormous power and splendour. Let malice and the base detraction of contemporary jealousy say what it will, greater originality of genius, more expansive variety of talent, never was exhibited than in our own country since the year 1793. Every mode of excellence, except only dramatic excellence (in which we have nothing modern to place by the side of Schiller's *Wallenstein*), has been revealed in dazzling lustre. And he that denies it, may he be suffocated by his own bilious envy!

But the point upon which we wish to fix the reader's attention in citing this interesting observation of the Roman officer, and the reason for which we have cited it at all, is not so much for the mere fact of these spring-tides occurring in the manifestations of human genius, intermitting pulses (so to speak) in human energies, as the psychological peculiarity which seems to affect the cycle of their recurrences. Paterculus occupies himself chiefly with the *causes* of such phenomena; and one main cause he suggests as lying in the emulation which possesses men when once a specific direction has been impressed upon

the public competitions. This no doubt is one of the causes. But a more powerful cause perhaps lies in a principle of union than in any principle of division amongst men, viz., in the principle of sympathy. The great Italian painters, for instance, were doubtless evoked in such crowds by the action of this principle. To hear the buzz of idolizing admiration settling for years upon particular works of art and artists, kindles something better than merely the ambition and rivalship of men; it kindles feelings happier and more favourable to excellence, viz., genial love and comprehension of the qualities fitted to stir so profound and lasting an emotion. This contagion of sympathy runs electrically through society, searches high and low for congenial powers, and suffers none to lurk unknown to the possessor. A vortex is created which draws into its suction whatever is liable to a similar action. But not to linger upon this question of causes, what we wish to place under the reader's eye is rather the peculiar type which belongs to these revolutions of national intellect, according to the place which each occupies in the order of succession. Possibly it would seem an over-refinement if we were to suggest that the odd terms in the series indicate creative energies, and the even terms reflective energies; and we are far enough from affecting the honours of any puerile hypothesis. But, in a

general way, it seems plausible and reasonable that there will be alternating successions of power in the first place, and next of reaction upon that power from the reflective faculties. It does seem natural that first of all should blossom the energies of creative power; and in the next era of the literature, when the consciousness has been brightened to its own agencies, will be likely to come forward the re-agencies of the national mind on what it has created. The period of meditation will succeed to the period of production. Or if the energies of creation are again partially awake, finding themselves forestalled as regards the grander passions, they will be likely to settle upon the feebler elements of manners. Social differences will now fix the attention by way of substitute for the bolder differences of nature. Should a third period, after the swing of the pendulum through an arch of centuries, succeed for the manifestation of the national genius, it is possible that the long interval since the inaugural era of creative art will have so changed all the elements of society and the aspects of life, as to restore the mind to much of its infant freedom; it may no longer feel the captivity of an imitative spirit in dealing with the very same class of creations as exercised its earliest powers. The original national genius may now come forward in perfectly new forms without the sense of

oppression from inimitable models. The hoar of ages may have withdrawn some of these models from active competition. And thus it may not be impossible that oscillations between the creative and reflective energies of the mind might go on through a cycle of many ages.

In our own literature we see this scheme of oscillations illustrated. In the Shakspere period we see the fulness of life and the enormity of power throwing up a tropical exuberance of vegetation. A century afterwards we see a generation of men lavishly endowed with genius, but partly degraded by the injurious training of a most profligate era growing out of great revolutionary convulsions, and partly lowered in the tone of their aspirations by a despair of rivalling the great creations of their predecessors. We see them universally acquiescing in humbler modes of ambition; showing sometimes a corresponding merit to that of their greatest forefathers, but merit (if sometimes equal) yet equal upon a lower scale. *Thirdly*, In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we see a new birth of original genius, of which it is not lawful to affirm any absolute inferiority even by comparison with the Shaksperian age of Titans. For whatsoever is strictly and thoroughly original, being *sui generis*, cannot be better or worse than any other model of excellence which is also original. One animal structure

compared with another of a different class is equally good and perfect. One valley which is no copy of another, but has a separate and peculiar beauty, cannot be compared for any purpose of disadvantage with another. One poem which is composed upon a law of its own, and has a characteristic or separate beauty of its own, cannot be inferior to any other poem whatsoever. The class, the order, may be inferior; the scale may be a lower one; but the individual work, the degree of merit marked upon the scale must be equal, if only the poem is equally original. In all such cases understand, ye miserable snarlers at contemporary merit, that the puerile *goût de comparaison* (as La Bruyère calls it) is out of place; universally you cannot affirm any *imparity* where the ground is preoccupied by *disparity*. Where there is no parity of principle there is no basis for comparison.

Now, passing, with the benefit of these explanations, to Grecian literature, we may observe that there were in that field of human intellect no more than two developments of power from first to last. And, perhaps, the unlearned reader (for it is to the praise and honour of a powerful journal, that it has the unlearned equally with the learned amongst its readers) will thank us for here giving him, in a very few words, such an account of the Grecian literature in its periods of

manifestation, and in the relations existing between these periods, that he shall not easily forget them.

There were, in illustration of the Roman aid-de-camp's* doctrine, two groups or clusters of Grecian wits; two depositions or stratifications of

* "*The Roman aid-de-camp's:*"—Excuse, reader, this modern phrase: by what other is it possible to express the relation to Tiberius, and the military office about his person, which Paterculus held on the German frontier? In the 104th chapter of his second book he says—"*Hoc tempus me, functum ante tribunatu castrorum, Tib. Cæsaris militem fecit;*" which in our version is—"This epoch placed me, who had previously discharged the duties of camp-marshal, upon the staff of Cæsar." And he goes on to say, that, having been made a brigadier-general of cavalry (*alæ præfectus*) under a commission which dated from the very day of Cæsar's adoption into the Imperial house and the prospect of succession, so that the two acts of grace ran concurrently—thenceforwards—"per annos continuos IX. præfectus aut legatus, spectator, et pro captu mediocritatis meæ, adjutor fui;" or, as I beg to translate, "through a period of nine consecutive years from this date, I acted either as military lieutenant to Cæsar, or as ministerial secretary" (such we hold to be the true virtual equivalent of *præfectus*; *i.e.*, speaking fully of *præfectus prætorio*), "acting simultaneously as inspector of the public works" [bridges and vast fortifications on the north-east German frontier], "and (to the best capacity of my slender faculties) as his personal aid-de-camp." Possibly the reader may choose to give a less confined or professional meaning to the word *adjutor*. But, in apology, we must suggest two cautions to him: 1st, That elsewhere, Paterculus does certainly apply the term as a military designation, bearing a known technical meaning; and, 2nd, That this word *adjutor*, in other non-military uses, as for instance on the stage, had none *but* a technical meaning.

the national genius; and these were about a century apart. What makes them specially rememberable is the fact that each of these brilliant clusters had gathered separately about that man as central pivot, who, even apart from this relation to the literature, was otherwise the leading spirit of his age. It is important for our purpose—it will be interesting, even without that purpose, for the reader—to notice the distinguishing character or marks by which the two clusters are separately recognised; the marks both personal and chronological. As to the personal distinctions, we have said that in each case severally the two men who offered the nucleus to the gathering happened to be otherwise the most eminent and splendid men of the period. Who were they? The one was PERICLES, the other was ALEXANDER OF MACEDON. Except Themistocles, who may be ranked as senior to Pericles by just one generation (or thirty-three years),* in the whole deduction of Grecian annals no other public man, statesman,

* This is too much to allow for a generation in those days, when the average duration of life was much less than at present; but, as an exceedingly convenient allowance (*since thrice 33½ is just equal to a century*) it may be allowedly used in all cases not directly bearing on technical questions of civil economy. Meanwhile, as we love to suppose ourselves in all cases as speaking *virginibus puerisque*, who, though reading no man's paper throughout, may yet often read a page or a paragraph of every man's—we, for the chance of catching their eye in a case where they may really gain in two minutes an

captain-general, administrator of the national resources, can be mentioned as approaching to these two men in splendour of reputation, or even in real merit. Pisistratus was too far back; Alcibiades, who might (chronologically speaking) have been the son of Pericles, was too unsteady and (according to Mr. Coleridge's coinage) "unreliable;" or, perhaps, in more correct English, too "*unrelyuponable.*"

ineradicable conspectus of the Greek literature (and for the sake of ignorant people universally, whose interests we hold sacred), add a brief explanation of what is meant by *a generation.* Is it meant or imagined that in so narrow a compass as 33 years + 4 months the whole population of a city, or a people, could have died off? By no means: not under the lowest value of human life. What is meant is—that a number *equal* to the whole population will have died: not X, the actual population, but a number equal to X. Suppose the population of Paris 900,000. Then, in the time allowed for one generation, 900,000 will have died: but then, to make up that number, there will be 300,000 furnished, not by the people now existing, but by the people who *will be born* in the course of the 33 years. And thus the balloting for death falls only upon two out of three, whom at first sight it appears to hit. It falls not exclusively upon X, but upon X + Y: this latter quantity Y being a quantity flowing concurrently with the lapse of the generation. Obvious as this explanation is, and almost childish, to every man who has even a tincture of political arithmetic, it is so far from being generally obvious, that, out of every thousand who will be interested in learning the earliest revolutions of literature, there will not be as many as ten who will know, even conjecturally, what is meant by a generation. Besides infinite other blunders and equivocations, many use an *age* and *a generation* as synonymous, whilst by *siècle* the French *uniformly* mean a *century.*

Thus far our purpose prospers. No man can pretend to forget two such centres as Pericles for the elder group, or Alexander of Macedon (the "strong he-goat" of Jewish prophecy) for the junior. Round these two *foci*, in two different but adjacent centuries, gathered the total starry heavens—the galaxy, the Pantheon of Grecian intellect. All that Greece produced of awful solemnity in her tragic stage, of riotous mirth and fancy in her comic stage, of power in her eloquence, of wisdom in her philosophy; all that has since tingled in the ears of twenty-four centuries, of her prosperity in the arts, her sculpture, her architecture, her painting, her music; everything, in short, excepting only her higher mathematics, which waited for a further development, which required the incubation of the musing intellect for yet another century, revolved like two neighbouring planetary systems about these two solar orbs. Two mighty vortices, Pericles and Alexander the Great, drew into strong eddies about themselves all the glory and the pomp of Greek literature, Greek eloquence, Greek wisdom, Greek art. Next, that we may still more severely search the relations in all points between the two systems, let us assign the chronological *locus* of each, because that will furnish another element towards the exact distribution of the chart representing the motion and the oscillations of human genius.

Pericles had a very long administration. He was Prime Minister of Athens for upwards of one entire generation. He died in the year 429 before Christ, and in a very early stage of that great Peloponnesian war, which was the one sole intestine war for Greece, affecting *every* nook and angle in the land. Now, in this long public life of Pericles, we are at liberty to fix on *any* year as his chronological *locus*. On good reasons, not called for in this place, we fix on the year 444 before Christ. This is too remarkable to be forgotten. *Four*, *four*, *four*, what at some games of cards is called a "*prial*" (we presume by an elision of the first vowel *a*, for *parial*), forms an era which no man can forget. It was the fifteenth year before the death of Pericles, and not far from the bisecting year of his political life. Now passing to the other system, the *locus* of Alexander is quite as remarkable, as little liable to be forgotten when once indicated, and more easily determined, because selected from a narrower range of choice. The exact chronological *locus* of Alexander the Great is 333 years before Christ. Everybody knows how brief was the career of this great man: it terminated in the year 320 before Christ. But the *annus mirabilis* of his public life, the most effective and productive year throughout his oriental anabasis, was the year 333 before Christ. Here we have another "*prial*," a prial

of threes, for the *locus* of Alexander, *if properly corrected.*

Thus far the elements are settled, the chronological longitude and latitude of the two great planetary systems into which the Greek literature breaks up and distributes itself: 444 and 333 are the two central years for the two systems; allowing, therefore, an interspace of 111 years between the *foci* of each. It is thought by some people that all those stars which you see glittering so restlessly on a keen frosty night in a high latitude, and which seem to have been sown broadcast with as much carelessness as grain lies on a threshing-floor; here showing vast zaarrahs of desert blue sky, there again lying close, and to some eyes presenting

"The beauteous semblance of a flock at rest,"

are in fact all gathered into zones or *strata*; that our own wicked little earth (with the whole of our peculiar solar system) is a part of such a zone, and that all this perfect geometry of the heavens, these radii in the mighty wheel, would become apparent, if we, the spectators, could but survey it from the true centre, which centre may be far too distant for any vision of man, naked or armed, to reach. However that may be, it is most instructive to see how many apparent scenes of confusion break up into orderly arrangement, when you are able to apply an *à priori* principle of organization to

their seeming chaos. The two vortices of the Greek literature are now separated; the chronological *loci* of their centres are settled. And next we request the reader thoughtfully to consider who *they* are of whom the elder system is composed.

In the centre, as we have already explained, is Pericles, the great practical statesman; and that orator of whom (amongst so many that vibrated thunderbolts) it was said peculiarly that he thundered and lightened as if he held this Jovian attribute by some individual title. We spare you Milton's magnificent description from the *Paradise Regained* of such an orator "wielding at will that fierce democracy," partly because the closing line in its reference "to *Macedon* and Artaxerxes' throne," too much points the homage to Demosthenes; but still more, because by too trivial a repetition of splendid passages, a serious injury is done to great poets. Passages of great musical effect, metrical bravuras, are absolutely vulgarized by too perpetual a parroting; and the care of Augustus Cæsar, *ne nomen suum obsolefieret*,* that

* The oddest feature in so odd a business was, that Augustus committed this castigation of bad poets to the police; but whence the police were to draw the skill for distinguishing between good poets and bad, is not explained. The poets must have found their weak minds somewhat astonished by the sentences of these reviewers—sitting like our Justices in Quarter Sessions, and deciding, perhaps, very much in the same terms; treating an Ode, if it were too martial, as a breach of the peace; directing an Epic poet to find security

the majesty of his name should not be vulgarized by bad poets, is more seriously needed in our days on behalf of great poets, to protect them from trivial or too parrot-like a citation.

Passing onwards from Pericles, you find that all the rest in *his* system were men in the highest sense creative, absolutely setting the very first examples, each in his peculiar walk of composition; themselves without previous models, and yet destined every man of them to become models for all after-generations; themselves without fathers or mothers, and yet having all posterity for their children. First come the three men, *divini spiritûs*, under a heavenly afflatus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, the creators of Tragedy out of a village mummery; next comes Aristophanes, who breathed the breath of life into Comedy; then comes the great philosopher, Anaxagoras, who first theorized successfully upon man and the world. Next come, whether great or not, the still more *famous* philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Xenophon; then comes, leaning upon Pericles, as sometimes Peri-

for his good behaviour during the next two years; and for the writers of Epithalamia on imperial marriages, ordering them "to be privately whipped and discharged." The whole affair is the more singular as coming from one who carried his *civilitas*, or show of popular manners, even to affectation. Power, without the invidious exterior of power, was the object of his life. Ovid seems to have noticed his inconsistency in this instance by reminding him, that even Jupiter did not disdain to furnish a theme for panegyric,

cles leaned upon *him*, the divine artist, Phidias ;* and behind this immortal man walk Herodotus and Thucydides. What a procession to Eleusis would these men have formed! what a frieze, if some great artist could arrange it, as dramatically as Chaucer has arranged the *Pilgrimage to Canterbury*.

It will be granted that this is unmasking a pretty strong battery of great guns for the Athens of Pericles. Now, let us step on a hundred years forward. We are now within hail of Alexander, and a brilliant consistory of Grecian men *that* is, by which he is surrounded. There are now exquisite masters of the more refined comedy; there are, again, great philosophers, for all the great schools are represented by able successors; and above all others, there is the one philosopher who played with men's minds (according to Lord Bacon's comparison) as freely as ever his princely pupil with their persons—there is Aristotle. There are great orators, and, above all others, there is that orator whom succeeding generations (wisely or not) have adopted as the representative

* "*Phidias*:"—that he was as much of a creative power as the rest of his great contemporaries, that he did not merely take up or pursue a career already opened by others, is pretty clear from the state of Athens, and of the forty marble quarries which he began to lay under contribution. The quarries were previously unopened; the city was as yet without architectural splendour.

name for what is conceivable in oratorical perfection—there is Demosthenes. Aristotle and Demosthenes are in themselves bulwarks of power; many hosts lie in those two names. For artists, again, to range against Phidias, there is Lysippus the sculptor, and there is Apelles the painter; for great captains and masters of strategic art, there is Alexander himself, with a glittering *cortège* of general officers, well qualified to wear the crowns which they will win, and to head the dynasties which they will found. Historians there are now, as in that former age; and, upon the whole, it cannot be denied that the "turn-out" is showy and imposing.

Before coming to that point, that is, before comparing the second "deposit" (geologically speaking) of Grecian genius with the first, let us consider what it was (if anything) that connected them. Here, reader, we would wish to put a question. Saving your presence, Did you ever see what is called a dumb-bell? We have; and know it by more painful evidence than that of sight.

You, therefore, O reader! if personally cognisant of dumb-bells, we will remind, if not, we will inform, that it is a cylindrical bar of iron or lead, issuing at each end in a globe of the same metal, and usually it is sheathed in green baize; but, perfidiously so, if that covering is meant to deny or to conceal the fact of those heart-rending

thumps which it inflicts upon one's too confiding fingers every third *ictus*. By the way, we have a vague remembrance that the late Mr. Thurtell, the same who was generally censured for murdering the late Mr. Weare, once in a dark lobby attempted to murder a friend by means of a dumb-bell; in which he showed his judgment, we mean in the choice of tools; for otherwise, in attempting to murder his friend, he was to blame. Now, reader, it is under this image of the dumb-bell we couch an allegory. Those globes at each end, are the two systems or separate clusters of Greek literature; and that cylinder which connects them, is the long man that ran into each system, binding the two together. Who was that? It was Isocrates. *Great* we cannot call him in conscience; and, therefore, by way of compromise, we call him *long*, which, in one sense, he certainly was; for he lived through four-and-twenty Olympiads, each containing four solar years. He narrowly escaped being a hundred years old; and though that did not carry him from centre to centre, yet as each system might be supposed to portend a radius each way of twenty years, he had, in fact, a full personal cognisance (and pretty equally) of the two systems, remote as they were, which composed the total world of Grecian genius. Two circumstances have made this man interesting to

all posterity; so that people, the most remote and different in character (Cicero, for instance, and Milton), have taken a delight in his memory. One is, that the school of rhetoric in Athens, which did not finally go down till the reign of Justinian, and, therefore, lasted above 940 years without interruption, began with *him*. He was, says Cicero, *De Orat.*, "Pater eloquentiæ;" and elsewhere he calls him "Communis magister oratorum." True, he never practised himself, for which he had two reasons: "My lungs," he tells us himself, "are weak;" and secondly, "I am naturally, as well as upon principle, a coward." There he was right. A man would never have seen twenty-four Olympiads who had gone about brawling and giving "jaw," as Demosthenes and Cicero did. You see what *they* made of it. The other feature of interest in this long man is precisely that fact, viz., that he *was* long. Everybody looks with kindness upon the snowy-headed man who saw the young prince Alexander of Macedon within four years of his starting for Persia; and personally knew most of those that gave lustre to the levees of Pericles. Accordingly, it is for this quality of length that Milton honours him with a touching memorial; for Isocrates was "that old man eloquent" of Milton's sonnet, whom the battle of Chæronea, "fatal to liberty, killed with report." This battle, by

which Philip overthrew the last struggles of dying independence in Greece, occurred in the year 338 before Christ. Philip was himself assassinated two years later. Consequently, had Isocrates pulled out, like Caoutchouc or Indian rubber, a little longer, he might have seen the silver shields, or Macedonian life-guards, embarking for Persia. In less than five years from that same battle, "fatal to liberty," Alexander was taking fatal liberties with Persia, and "tickling the catastrophe" of Darius. There were just seventy good years between the two expeditions, the Persian anabasis of Cyrus the younger, and the Persian anabasis of Alexander; but Isocrates knew personally many officers and *savans** in both.

* "Officers and *savans*:"—Ctesias held the latter character, Xenophon united both, in the earlier expedition. These were friends of Isocrates. In the latter expedition, the difficulty would have been to find the man, whether officer or *savant*, who was *not* the friend of Isocrates. Old age, such as his, was a very rare thing in Greece; a fact which is evident from a Greek work surviving on the subject of Macrobiotics: few cases occur beyond seventy. This accident, therefore, of longevity in Isocrates, must have made him already one of the standing lions in Athens for the last twenty-six years of his life; while, for the last seventy, his professorship of rhetoric must have brought him into connexion with every great family in Greece. One thing puzzles us, what he did with his money, for he must have made a great deal. He had two prices; for he charged high to those who could afford it; and why not? People are not to learn the art of prating for nothing. Yet, being a teetotaller and a coward, how could he spend his money? That question is vexatious.

Others, beside Cicero and Milton, have taken a deep interest in Isocrates; and, for the very circumstance we have been noticing, his *length*, combined with the accident of position which made that length effective in connecting the two-fold literature of Greece. Had he been "*long*" in any other situation than just in that dreary desert between the oasis of Pericles and the oasis of Alexander, what good would that have done us? "A wounded snake" or an Alexandrine verse, that "drags its slow length along," would have been as useful. But he, feeling himself wanted, laid its length down like a railroad, exactly where he could be useful—with his positive pole towards Pericles, and his negative pole towards Alexander. Even Gibbon—even the frosty Gibbon—condescends to be pleased with this seasonable application of his two termini: "Our sense," says he, in his 40th chapter, "of the dignity of human nature is exalted * by the simple recollection, that Isocrates

However, this one possibility in the long man's life will for ever make him interesting; he might have seen, and it is even probable that he *did* see Xenophon *dis*mount from some horse which he had stolen at Trebizond on his return from the Cyrus expedition; and he might also have seen Alexander mount for Chæronea. Alexander was present at that battle, and personally joined in a charge of cavalry. It is not impossible that he may have ridden Bucephalus.

* *Is exalted*:"—The logic of Gibbon may seem rather cloudy. Why should it exalt our sense of human dignity, that Isocrates was the youthful companion of Plato or

was the companion of Plato and Xenophon; that he assisted, perhaps with the historian Thucydides, at the first representations of the Œdipus of Sophocles and Iphigenia of Euripides." So far in relation to the upper terminus of the long man; next, with reference to the lower terminus, Gibbon goes on: "And that his pupils, Æschines and Demosthenes, contended for the *crown* of patriotism in the presence of Aristotle, the master of Theophrastus, who taught at Athens with the founders of the Stoic and Epicurean sects."

Now then, reader, you have arrived at that station from which you overlook the whole of Greek literature, as a few explanations will soon convince you. Where is Homer, where is Hesiod? you ask; where is Pindar? Homer and Hesiod lived a thousand years B.C., or, by the lowest

Euripides, and the aged companion of Demosthenes? It ought, therefore, to be mentioned, that, in the sentence preceding, he had spoken of Athens as a city that "condensed, within the period of a single life, the genius of ages and millions." The condensation is the measure of the dignity; and Isocrates, as the "single life" alluded to, is the measure of the condensation. That is the logic. By the way, Gibbon ought always to be cited by the *chapter*—the page and volume of course evanesce with many forms of publication, while the chapter is *always* available; and, in the commonest form of twelve volumes, because useful in a second function, as a guide to the particular volume; for six chapters, with hardly any exception (*if* any), are thrown into each volume. Consequently, the 40th chapter, standing in the seventh series of sixes, indicates the seventh volume.

computations, near nine hundred. For anything that we know, they may have lived with Tubal Cain. At all events, they belong to no power or agency that set in motion the age of Pericles, or that operated on that age. Pindar, again, was a solitary emanation of some unknown influences, at Thebes, more than five hundred years before Christ. He may be referred to the same era as Pythagoras. These are all that can be cited *before* Pericles.

Next, for the ages *after* Alexander, it is certain that Greece Proper was so much broken in spirit by the loss of her *autonomy* dating from that era, as never again to have rallied sufficiently to produce a single man of genius; not one solitary writer who acted as a power upon the national mind. Callimachus was nobody, and not decidedly Grecian. Theocritus, a man of real genius in a limited way, is a Grecian in that sense only according to which an Anglo-American is an Englishman. Besides that, one swallow does not make a summer. Of any other writers, above all others, of Menander, apparently a man of Divine genius, we possess only a few wrecks; and of Anacreon, who must have been a poet of original power, we do not certainly know that we have even any wrecks. Of those which pass under his name, not merely the authorship, but the era is very questionable indeed. Plutarch and Lucian, the unlearned reader must understand, both belong

to *post*-Christian ages, And for all the Greek emigrants who may have written histories, such as we now value for their matter more than for their execution, one and all they belong too much to Roman civilisation, that we should ever think of connecting them with native Greek literature.*

* Excepting fragmentary writers, Sappho and Simonides, and the contributors to the Greek Anthologies (which, however, next after the scenic literature, offer the most interesting expressions of Greek household feeling), we are not aware of having omitted in this rapid review any one name that could be fancied to be a weighty name, excepting that of Lycophron. Of him we will say a word or two: The work, by which he is known, is a monologue or dramatic scene from the mouth of one single speaker; this speaker is Cassandra the prophetic daughter of Priam. In about 1500 Iambic lines (the average length of a Greek tragedy), she pours forth a dark prophecy with respect to all the heroes engaged in the Trojan war, typifying their various unhappy catastrophes by symbolic images, which should naturally be intelligible enough to us who know their several histories, but which (from the particular selection of accidents or circumstances used for the designation of the persons) read like riddles without the aid of a commentator. This prophetic gloom, and the impassioned character of the many woes arising notoriously to the conquerors as well as the conquered in the sequel of the memorable war, give a colouring of dark power to the Cassandra of Lycophron. Else we confess to the fact of not having been much impressed by the poem. We read it in the year 1809, having been told that it was the most difficult book in the Greek language. This is the popular impression, but a very false one. It is not difficult at all as respects the language (allowing for a few peculiar Lycophrontic words); the difficulty lies in the allusions, which are *intentionally* obscure. Lycophron did as we now do in eclipses—he *smoked* the glass through which he gazed.

Polybius in the days of the second Scipio, Dion Cassius, and Appian, in the acmé of Roman civility, are no more Grecian authors, because they wrote in Greek, than the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, or Julian, were other than Romans, because, from monstrous coxcombry, they chose to write in Greek their barren memoranda. As well might Gibbon be thought not an Englishman, or Leibnitz not a German; because the former in composing the first draft of his essay on literature, and the latter in composing his *Theodicée*, used the French language. The motive in all these cases was analogous: amongst the Greek writers, it was the affectation of reaching a particular body of educated men, a learned class, to the exclusion of the uninstructed multitude. With the affectors of French, the wish was, to reach a particular body of thinkers, with whose feelings they had a special sympathy from personal habituation to their society, and to whose prejudices, literary or philosophic, they had adapted their train of argument.

No; the Greek literature ends at the point we have fixed, viz., with the era of Alexander. No power, no heart-subduing agency, was ever again incarnated in any book, system of philosophy, or other model of creative energy, growing upon Grecian soil or from Grecian roots. Creation was extinct; the volcano was burnt out. What books

appeared at scattered intervals during the three centuries still remaining before the Christian era, lie under a reproach, pretty general, which perhaps has not been perceived. From the titles and passing notices of their objects, or mode of dealing with their objects, such as we derive from Cicero and many others, it is evident that they were merely professional books, text-books for lectures addressed to students, or polemic works addressed to competitors. Chairs of rhetoric and philosophy had now been founded in Athens. A great university, the resort of students from all nations, was established, and, in a sense sufficient to insure the perpetual succession of these corporate bodies, was endowed. Books, therefore, and labouring with the same two opposite defects as are unjustly charged upon the schoolmen of the middle ages, viz., dulness from absolute monotony, and visionariness from the aërial texture of the speculations, continued to be written in discharge of professional obligations, or in pursuit of professional interest. The *summum bonum* was discussed until it had become the capital affliction of human patience, the *summum malum* of human life. Beyond these there was no literature; and these products of dreaming indolence, which terminated in making the very name of Greek philosopher and Greek rhetorician, a jest and byword amongst the manlier Romans, no more constituted a literature than a

succession of academic studies from the pupils of a royal institution can constitute a school of fine art.

Here, therefore, at this era of Alexander, 333 B.C., when every Greek patriot had reason to say of his native literature, "*Venimus ad summum fortunæ;*" we have seen the best of our days; we must look for the Greek ideas of style, and the Greek theories of composition, in the uttermost development that either *could* have received. In the earlier system of Greek intellectual strength, in the era of Pericles, the powers of style would be most comprehensively exercised. In the second system, in the era of Alexander, the light of conscious recognition and direct examination would be most effectually applied. The first age furnished the power; the second furnished the science. The first brought the concrete model, the second brought the abstracting skill; and between them the whole compass of Greek speculation upon this point would be brought to a focus. Such being the state of preparation, what was the result?

## PART IV.

"*Such being the state of preparation, what was the result?*" These words concluded our last essay. There had been two manifestations or bright epiphanies of the Grecian intellect, revelations in two separate forms; the first having gathered about Pericles in the year 444 B.C., the second about Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.; the first being a pure literature of creative power, the second in a great measure of reflective power; the first fitted to call out the differences of style, the second to observe, classify, and discuss them: under these circumstances of favourable preparation, what had been the result? Where style exists in strong colouring as a practice or art, we reasonably expect that style should soon follow as a theory, as a science explaining that art, tracing its varieties, and teaching its rules. To use ancient distinctions, where the "*rhetorica utens*" has been cultivated with eminent success (as in early Greece it had), it is but natural to expect many consequent attempts at a "*rhetorica docens.*" And especially it is natural to do so in a case where the theorizing intellect had been powerfully awakened. What, therefore, we ask again, had been in fact the result?

We must acknowledge that it had fallen far below the reasonable standard of our expectations. Greece, it is true, produced a long series of works on rhetoric, many of which, though not easily met with,* survive to this day; and one which stands first in order of time, viz., the great work of Aristotle, is of such distinguished merit, that some eminent moderns have not scrupled to rank it as the very foremost legacy in point of psychological knowledge which Pagan literature has bequeathed to us. Without entering upon so large a comparison as that, we readily admit the commanding talent which this work displays. But it is under an equivocal use of the word "rhetoric" that the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle could ever have been classed with books treating of style. There is in fact, a complex distinction to which the word rhetoric is liable: 1st, it means the *rhetorica utens*, as when we praise the rhetoric of Seneca or Sir Thomas Browne, not meaning anything which they taught, but something which they practised; not a doctrine which they delivered, but a machinery of composition which they employed. 2ndly,

* "*Not easily met with:*"—From Germany we have seen reprints of some eight or nine; but once only, so far as our bibliography extends, were the whole body published collectively. This was at the Aldine press in Venice more than three centuries ago. Such an interval, and so solitary a publication, sufficiently explain the non-familiarity of modern scholars with this section of Greek literature.

it means the *rhetorica docens*, as when we praise the rhetoric of Aristotle or Hermogenes, writers far enough from being rhetorical by their own style of writing, but writers who professedly taught others to be rhetorical. 3dly, the *rhetorica utens* itself is subdivided into two meanings, so wide apart that they have very little bearing on each other; one being applied to the art of persuasion, the dexterous use of plausible topics for recommending any opinion whatever to the favour of an audience; this is the Grecian sense universally, the other being applied to the art of composition, the art of treating any subject ornamentally, gracefully, affectingly. There is another use of the word rhetoric distinct from all these, and hitherto, we believe, not consciously noticed; of which at some other time.

Now, this last subdivision of the word rhetoric, viz., "Rhetoric considered as a practising art, *rhetorica utens*," which is the sense exclusively indicated by our modern use of the term, is not at all concerned in the rhetoric of Aristotle. It is rhetoric as a mode of moral suasion, as a technical system for obtaining a readiness in giving to the false a colouring of plausibility, to the doubtful a colouring of probability, or in giving to the true, when it happens to be obscure, the benefit of a convincing exposition; this it is which Aristotle undertakes to teach, and not at

all the art of ornamental composition. In fact, it is the whole body of public *extempore* speakers whom he addresses, not the body of deliberate writers in any section whatever. And, therefore, whilst conceding readily all the honour which is claimed for that great man's rhetoric, by this one distinction as to what it was that he meant by rhetoric, we evade at once all necessity for modifying our general proposition, viz., that style in our modern sense, as a theory of composition, as an art of constructing sentences and weaving them into coherent wholes, was not effectually cultivated amongst the Greeks. It was not so well understood, nor so distinctly contemplated in the light of a separate accomplishment, as afterwards among the Romans. And we repeat, that this result from circumstances *prima facie* so favourable to the very opposite result, is highly remarkable. It is *so* remarkable, that we shall beg permission to linger a little upon those features in the Greek literature, which most of all might seem to have warranted our expecting from Greece the very consummation of this delicate art. For these same features, which would separately have justified that expectation, may happen, when taken in combination with others, to account for its disappointment.

There is, then, amongst the earliest phenomena of the Greek literature, and during its very

inaugural period, one which of itself and singly furnishes a presumption for expecting an exquisite investigation of style. It lies in the fact, that two out of the three great tragic poets carried his own characteristic quality of style to a morbid excess; to such an excess as should force itself, and in fact *did* force itself into popular notice. Had these poets all alike exhibited that sustained and equable tenor of tragic style which we find in Sophocles, it is not probable that the vulgar attention would have been fixed by its character. Where a standard of splendour is much raised, provided all parts are simultaneously raised on the same uniform scale, we know by repeated experience in many modes of display, whether in dress, in architecture, in the embellishment of rooms, etc., that this raising of the standard is not perceived with much vivacity; and that the feelings of this spectator are soon reconciled to alterations that are harmonized. It is always by some want of uniformity, some defect in following out the scale, that we become roused to conscious observation of the difference between this and our former standards. We exaggerate these differences in such a case, as much as we undervalue them in a case where all is symmetrical. We might expect, therefore, beforehand, that the opposite characteristics as to style of Æschylus and Euripides, would force themselves upon the notice of

the Athenian populace; and, in fact, we learn from the Greek scholiasts on these poets, that this effect did really follow. These scholiasts, indeed, belong to a later age. But we know by traditions which they have preserved, and we know from Aristotle himself, the immediate successor of the great tragic poets (indirectly we know also from the stormy ridicule of Aristophanes, who may be viewed as contemporary with those poets), that Æschylus was notorious to a proverb amongst the very mob, for the stateliness, pomp, and towering character of his diction; whilst Euripides was equally notorious, not merely for a diction in a lower key, more household, more natural, less elaborate, but also for cultivating such a diction by study and deliberate preference. Having such great models of contrasting style to begin with, having the attention converged upon these differences by the furious merriment of Aristophanes, less than a Grecian wit would have felt a challenge in all this to the investigation of style, as a great organ of difference between man and man, between poet and poet.

But there was a more enduring reason in the circumstances of Greece, for entitling us to expect from her the perfect theory of style. It lay in those accidents of time and place which obliged Greece to spin most of her speculations, like a spider, out of her own bowels. Now, for such a

kind of literature style is, generally speaking, paramount; for a literature less self-evolved, style is more liable to neglect. Modern nations have laboured under the very opposite disadvantage. The excess of external materials has sometimes oppressed their creative power, and sometimes their meditative power. The exuberance of *objective* knowledge—that knowledge which carries the mind to materials existing *out* of itself, such as natural philosophy, chemistry, physiology, astronomy, geology, where the mind of the student goes for little, and the external object for much—has had the effect of weaning men from subjective speculation, where the mind is all in all, and the alien object next to nothing; and in that degree has weaned them from the culture of style. Now, on the other hand, if you suppose a man in the situation of Baron Trenck at Spandau, or Spinosa in the situation of Robinson Crusoe at Juan Fernandez, or a contemplative monk of the thirteenth century in his cell, you will perceive that—unless he were a poor feeble-minded creature like Cowper's Bastile prisoner, thrown by utter want of energy upon counting the very nails of his dungeon in all permutations and combinations—rather than quit the external world, he must in his own defence, were it only as a relief from gnawing thoughts, cultivate some *subjective* science; that is, some branch of knowledge

which, drawing everything from the mind itself, is independent of external resources. Such a science is found in the relations of man to God, that is in theology; in the determinations of space, that is in geometry; in the relations of existence or being universally to the human mind, otherwise called metaphysics or ontology; in the relations of the mind to itself, otherwise called logic. Hence it was that the scholastic philosophy evolved itself, like a vast spider's loom, between the years 1100 and 1400. Men shut up in solitude, with the education oftentimes of scholars, with a life of leisure, but with hardly any books, and no means of observation, were absolutely forced, if they would avoid lunacy, from energies unoccupied with any object, to create an object out of those very energies: they were driven by mere pressure of solitude, and sometimes of eternal silence, into raising vast aërial Jacob's ladders of vapoury metaphysics, just as endless as those meteorologic phenomena which technically bear that name, just as sublime and aspiring in their tendency upwards, and sometimes (but not always) just as unsubstantial. In this present world of the practical and the ponderable, we so little understand or value such abstractions, though once our British schoolmen took the lead in these subtleties, that we confound their very natures and names. Most people

with us mean by metaphysics, what is properly called psychology. Now, these two are so far from being the same thing, that the former could be pursued (and, to say the truth, was, in fact, under Aristotle created) by the monk in his unfurnished cell, where nothing ever entered but moonbeams. Whereas psychology is but in part a subjective science; in some proportion it is also *objective*, depending on multiplied experience, or on multiplied records of experience. Psychology, therefore, *could* not have been cultivated extensively by the schoolmen; and, in fact, would not have been cultivated at all, but for the precedent of Aristotle. He, who laid the foundation of their metaphysics, which have nothing to do with man, had also written a work on man; viz., on the human soul, besides other smaller works on particular psychological phenomena (such as dreaming). Hence, through mere imitation, arose the short sketches of psychology amongst the schoolmen. Else *their* vocation lay to metaphysics, as a science which can dance upon moonbeams, and that vocation arose entirely out of their circumstances,—solitude, scholarship, and no books. Total extinction there was for them of all objective materials, and therefore, as a consequence inevitable, reliance on the solitary energies of their own minds. Like Christabel's chamber lamp, and the angels from which it was suspended,

all was the invention of the unprompted artist,—

"All made out of the carver's brain."

Models he had none before him, for printed books were yet sleeping in futurity, and the gates of a grand asceticism were closed upon the world of life. We moderns, indeed, fancy that the necessities of the Romish church—the mere instincts of self-protection in Popery—were what offered the bounty on this air-woven philosophy; and partly that is true; but it is most certain that all the bounties in this world would have failed to operate effectually, had they not met with those circumstances in the silent life of monasteries which favoured the growth of such a self-spun metaphysical divinity. Monastic life predisposed the restlessness of human intellect to move in that direction. It was one of the few directions compatible with solitude and penury of books. It was the only one that opened an avenue at once to novelty and to freedom of thought. Now then, precisely what the monastic life of the schoolmen was in relation to philosophy, the Greece of Pericles had been in relation to literature. What circumstances, what training, or predisposing influences existed for the monk in his cell, the same (or such as were tantamount) existed for the Grecian wit in the atmosphere of Athens. Three great agencies were at work, and unconsciously moulding the efforts of the earliest

schoolmen about the opening of the Crusades, and of the latest, some time after their close;—three analogous agencies, the same in virtue, though varied in circumstances, gave impulse and guidance to the men of Greece, from Pericles, at the opening of Greek literature, to Alexander of Macedon, who witnessed its second harvest. And these agencies were,—1*st*, Leisure in excess, with a teeming intellect: the burden, under a new-born excitement, of having nothing to do. 2*nd*, Scarcity without an absolute famine of books; enough to awake the dormant cravings, but not enough to gratify them without personal participation in the labours of intellectual creation. 3*rd*, A revolutionary restlessness, produced by the recent establishment of a new and growing public interest.

The two first of these agencies, for stimulating intellects already roused by agitating changes, are sufficiently obvious ; though few perhaps are aware to what extent idleness prevailed in Pagan Greece, and even in Rome, under the system of household slavery, and under the bigoted contempt of commerce. But waiving that point, and, for the moment, waiving also the degree of scarcity which affected books at the era of Pericles, we must say one word as to the two great analogous public interests which had formed themselves separately, and with a sense of revolutionary

power, for the Greeks on the one hand, and for the schoolmen on the other. As respected the Grecians, and especially the Athenians, this excitement lay in the sentiment of nationality which had been first powerfully organized by the Persian war. Previously to that war the sentiment no doubt smouldered obscurely; but the oriental invasion it was which kindled it into a torrent of flame. And it is interesting to remark, that the very same cause which fused and combined these scattered tribes into the unity of Hellas, viz., their common interest in making head against an awful invader, was also the cause which most of all separated them into local parties by individual rivalship and by characteristic services. The arrogant Spartan, mad with a French-like self-glorification, boasted for ever of his little Thermopylæ. Ten years earlier the far sublimer display of Athenian Marathon, to say nothing of after services at Salamis or elsewhere, had placed Attica at the summit of the Greek family. No matter whether selfish jealousy would allow that pre-eminence to be recognised, doubtless it was felt. With this civic pre-eminence arose concurrently for Athens the development of an intellectual pre-eminence. On this we need say nothing. But even here, although the pre-eminence was too dazzling to have been at any time overlooked, yet with some injustice in every age to

Athens, her light has been recognised, but not what gave it value, the contrasting darkness of all around her. This did not escape Paterculus, whose understanding is always vigilant. "We talk," says he, "of *Grecian* eloquence or *Grecian* poetry, when we should say *Attic*; for who has ever heard of Theban orators, of Lacedæmonian artists, or Corinthian poets?"* Æschylus, the first great author of Athens (for Herodotus was not Athenian), personally fought in the Persian war. Consequently the two modes of glory for Athens were almost of simultaneous emergence. And what we are now wishing to insist on is, that precisely by and through this great unifying event, viz., the double inroad of Asia militant upon Greece, Greece first became generally and reciprocally known to Greece herself; that Greece was then first arranged and *cast*, as it were dramatically, according to her capacities, services, duties; that a general consciousness was then

* People will here remind us, that Aristotle was half a foreigner, being born at Stagira in Macedon. Ay, but amongst Athenian emigrants, and of an Athenian father. His mother we think was Thracian. The crossing of races almost uniformly terminates in producing splendour, at any rate energy of intellect. If the roll of great men, or at least of energetic men, in Christendom, were carefully examined, it would astonish us to observe how many have been the children of mixed marriages; *i.e.*, of alliances between two bloods as to nation, although the races might originally have been the same.

diffused of the prevailing relations in which each political family stood to the rest; and that in the leading states every intellectual citizen drew a most agitating excitement from the particular character of glory which had settled upon his own tribe, and the particular station which had devolved upon it amongst the champions of civilisation.

That was the *positive* force acting upon Athens. Now, reverting to the monkish schoolmen, in order to complete the parallel, what was the corresponding force acting upon *them?* Leisure, and want of books, were accidents common to both parties; to the scholastic age and to the age of Pericles. These were the *negative* forces, concurring with others to sustain a movement once begun, but incapable of giving the original impulse. What was the active, the *affirmative* force, which effected for the scholastic monks that unity and sense of common purposes, which had been effected for the Greeks by the sudden development of a Grecian interest opposed to a Persian; of a civilized interest, under sudden peril, opposed to the barbarism of the universal planet?

What was there for the race of monkish schoolmen labouring through three centuries, in the nature of a known palpable interest, which could balance so grand a principle of union and of effort, as this acknowledged guardianship of civilisation had suddenly unfolded, like a banner, for

the Greeks, during the infancy of Pericles.?* What *could* there be of corresponding grandeur ?

Beforehand, this should have seemed impossible; but, in reality, a far grander mode of interest had arisen for the schoolmen: grander, because more indefinite; more indefinite, because spiritual. It was this:—The Western or Latin Church had slowly developed her earthly power. As an edifice of civil greatness throughout the western world, she stood erect and towering. In the eleventh century, beyond all others, she had settled her deep foundations. The work thus far was complete ; but blank civil power, though indispensable, was the feeblest of her arms, and, taken separately, was too frail to last, besides that it was liable to revolutions. The authority by which chiefly she ruled, had ruled, and hoped to rule, was spiritual; and with the growing institutions of the age, embodying so much of future resistance, it was essential that this spiritual influence should be founded on a subtle philosophy, difficult to learn, difficult to refute ; as also that many dogmas already established, such as tradition, by way of prop to infallibility, should

* It is well to give unity to our grandest remembrances, by connecting them, as many as can be, with the same centre. Pericles died in the year 429 before Christ. Supposing his age to be fifty-six, he would then be born about 485 B.C.; that is, five years after the first Persian invasion under Darius, five years before the second under Xerxes.

receive a far ampler development. The Latin Church, we must remember, was not yet that Church of Papal Rome, in the maturity of its doctrines and its pretensions, which it afterwards became. And when we consider how vast a benefactress this Church had been to early Christendom when moulding and settling her foundations, as also in what light she must have appeared to her own pious children in centuries where as yet only the first local breezes of opposition had begun to whisper amongst the Albigenses, etc., we are bound in all candour to see that a sublimer interest could not have existed for any series of philosophers, than the profound persuasion that by marrying metaphysics to divinity, two sciences even separately so grand, and by the pursuit of labyrinthine truth, they were building up an edifice reaching to the heavens—the great spiritual fortress of the Catholic Church.

Here let us retrace the course of our speculations, lest the reader should suppose us to be wandering.

First, for the sake of illustrating more vividly the influences which acted on the Greece of Pericles, we bring forward another case analogously circumstanced, as moulded by the same causes;—1. The same condition of intellect under revolutionary excitement; 2. The same penury of books; 3. The same chilling gloom from the

absence of female charities; the consequent reaction of that oppressive *ennui* which Helvetius fancied, amongst all human agencies, to be the most potent stimulant for the intellect; 4. The same (though far different) enthusiasm and elevation of thought, from disinterested participation in forwarding a great movement of the age; for the one side, involving the glory of their own brilliant country, and concurrent with civilisation; for the other, co-extensive with all spiritual truth and all spiritual power.

Next, we remark, that men living permanently under such influences must, of mere necessity, resort to that order of intellectual pursuits which requires little aid *ab extra;* that order, in fact, which philosophically is called "subjective," as drawing much from our own proper selves, or little (if anything) from extraneous objects.

And then, thirdly, we remark, that such pursuits are peculiarly favourable to the culture of style. In fact they force that culture. A man who has absolute facts to communicate from some branch of study external to himself, as physiology, suppose, or anatomy, or astronomy, is careless of style; or at least he may be so, because he is independent of style, for what he has to communicate neither readily admits, nor much needs, any graces in the mode of communication; the matter transcends and oppresses the manner.

The matter tells without any manner at all. But he who has to treat a vague question, such as Cicero calls a *quæstio infinita*, where everything is to be finished out of his own peculiar feelings, or his own way of viewing things (in contradistinction to a *quæstio finita*, where determinate *data* from without already furnish the main materials), soon finds that the manner of treating it not only transcends the matter, but very often, and in a very great proportion, *is* the matter. In very many subjective exercises of the mind, as, for instance, in that class of poetry which has been formally designated by this epithet (meditative poetry, we mean, in opposition to the Homeric, which is intensely objective), the problem before the writer is to project his own inner mind; to bring out consciously what yet lurks by involution in many unanalysed feelings; in short, to pass through a prism and radiate into distinct elements what previously had been even to himself but dim and confused ideas intermixed with each other. Now, in such cases, the skill with which detention or conscious arrest is given to the evanescent, external projection to what is internal, outline to what is fluxionary, and body to what is vague,—all this depends entirely on the command over language as the one sole means of embodying ideas; and, in such cases, the style, or, in the largest sense, *manner*, is confluent with

the matter. But, at all events, even by those who are most impatient of any subtleties, or what they consider "metaphysical" distinctions, thus much must be conceded, viz., that those who rest upon external facts, tangible realities, and circumstantial details, in short, generally upon the *objective*, whether in a case of narration or of argument, must for ever be less dependent upon style, than those who have to draw upon their own understandings and their own peculiar feelings for the furniture and matter of their composition. A single illustration will make this plain. It is an old remark, and, in fact, a subject of continual experience, that lawyers fail as public speakers in the House of Commons. Even Erskine, the greatest of modern advocates, was nobody as a senator; and the "fluent Murray," two generations before him, had found his fluency give way under that mode of trial. But why? How was it possible that a man's fluency in one chamber of public business should thus suddenly be defeated and confounded in another? The reason is briefly expressed in Cicero's distinction between a *quæstio finita* and a *quæstio infinita*. In the courts of law, the orator was furnished with a brief; an abstract of facts; downright statements upon oath; circumstances of presumption; and, in short, a whole volume of topics external to his own mind. Sometimes, it is true, the advocate

would venture a little out to sea, *proprio marte*: in a case of *crim. con.*, for instance, he would attempt a little picture of domestic happiness drawn from his own funds. But he was emboldened to do this from his certain knowledge, that in the facts of his brief he had always a hasty retreat in case of any danger that he should founder. If the little picture prospered, it was well: if not, if symptoms of weariness began to arise in the audience, or of hesitation in himself, it was but to cut the matter short, and return to the *terra firma* of his brief, when all again was fluent motion. Besides that each separate transition, and the distribution of the general subject, offered themselves spontaneously in a law case; the logic was given as well as the method. Very often the mere order of chronology dictated the succession and arrangement of the topics. Now, on the other hand, in a House of Commons' oration, although sometimes there may occur statements of fact and operose calculations, still these are never more than a text, at the very best, for the political discussion, but often no more than a subsequent illustration or proof attached to some one of its heads. The main staple of any long speech must always be some general view of national policy; and, in Cicero's language, such a view must always be *infinita*; that is, not determined *ab extra*, but shaped and

drawn from the funds of one's own understanding. The facts are here subordinate and ministerial; in the case before a jury, the facts are all in all. The forensic orator satisfies his duty, if he does but take the facts exactly as they stand in his brief, and place them before his audience in that order, and even (if he should choose it) in those words. The parliamentary orator has no opening for facts at all, but as he himself may be able to create such an opening by some previous expositions of doctrine or opinion, of the probable or expedient. The one is always creeping along shore; the other is always out at sea. Accordingly, the degrees of anxiety which severally affect the two cases, is best brought to the test in this one question—"*What shall I say next?*" an anxiety besetting orators like that which besets poor men in respect to their children's daily bread. "This moment it is secured; but, alas for the next!" Now, the judicial orator finds an instant relief: the very points of the case are numbered; and, if he cannot find more to say upon No. 7, he has only to pass on and call up No. 8. Whereas, the deliberative orator, in a senate or literary meeting, finds himself always in this situation, that having reached with difficulty that topic which we have supposed to be No. 7, one of three cases uniformly occurs: either he does not perceive any No. 8 at all; or,

secondly, he sees a distracting choice of No. 8's —the ideas to which he might next pass are many, but he does not see whither they will lead him; or, thirdly, he sees a very fair and promising No. 8, but cannot in any way discover, off-hand, how he is to effect a transition to this new topic. He cannot, with the rapidity requisite, modulate out of the one key into the other. His anxiety increases, utter confusion masters him, and he breaks down.

We have made this digression by way of seeking, in a well-known case of public life, an illustration of the difference between a subjective and an objective exercise of the mind. It is the sudden translation from the one exercise to the other, which, and which only, accounts for the failure of advocates when attempting senatorial efforts. Once used to depend on memorials or briefs of facts, or of evidence not self-derived, the advocate, like a child in leading-strings, loses that command over his own internal resources, which otherwise he might have drawn from practice. In fact, the advocate, with his brief lying before him, is precisely in the condition of a parliamentary speaker who places a written speech or notes for a speech in his hat. This trick has sometimes been practised: and the consternation which would befal the orator in the case of such a hat-speech being suddenly blown away, precisely

realizes the situation of a *nisi prius* orator when first getting on his legs in the House of Commons. He has swum with bladders all his life: suddenly he must swim without them.

This case explains why it is that all subjective branches of study favour the cultivation of style. Whatsoever is entirely independent of the mind, and external to it, is generally equal to its own enunciation. Ponderable facts, and external realities are intelligible in almost any language: they are self-explained and self-sustained. But the more closely any exercise of mind is connected with what is internal and individual in the sensibilities, that is, with what is philosophically termed *subjective*, precisely in that degree, and the more subtly, does the style or the embodying of the thoughts cease to be a mere separable ornament, and in fact the more does the manner, as we expressed it before, become confluent with the matter. In saying this, we do but vary the form of what we once heard delivered on this subject by Mr. Wordsworth: his remark was by far the weightiest thing we ever heard on the subject of style; and it was this: That it is in the highest degree unphilosophic to call language or diction "the *dress* of thoughts;" and what was it then that he would substitute? Why this: he would call it "the *incarnation* of thoughts." Never, in one word, was so profound a truth conveyed.

Mr. Wordsworth was thinking, doubtless, of poetry like his own; viz., that which is eminently meditative. And the truth is apparent on consideration: for, if language were merely a dress, then you could separate the two: you could lay the thoughts on the left hand, the language on the right. But, generally speaking, you can no more deal thus with poetic thoughts, than you can with soul and body. The union is too subtle; the intertexture too ineffable, each co-existing not merely *with* the other, but each *in* and *through* the other. An image, for instance, a single word, often enters into a thought as a constituent part. In short, the two elements are not united as a body with a separable dress, but as a mysterious incarnation. And thus, in what proportion the thoughts are subjective, in that same proportion does their very essence become identical with the expression, and the style become confluent with the matter.

The Greeks, by want of books, philosophical instruments, and innumerable other aids to all objective researches, being thrown more exclusively than we upon their own unaided minds, cultivated logic, ethics, metaphysics, psychology; all thoroughly subjective studies. The schoolmen, in the very same situation, cultivated precisely the same field of knowledge. The Greeks, indeed, added to their studies that of geometry;

for the inscription over the gate of the Academy (let no one enter who is not instructed in geometry) sufficiently argues that this science must have made some progress in the days of Pericles, when it could thus be made a general qualification for admission to a learned establishment within thirty years after his death. But geometry is partly an objective, partly a subjective study. With this exception, the Greeks and the monastic schoolmen trode the very same path.

Consequently, in agreement with our principle, both ought to have found themselves in circumstances favourable to the cultivation of style. And it is certain that they did. As an *art*, as a practice, it was felicitously pursued in both cases. It is true that the harsh ascetic mode of treating philosophy by the schoolmen generated a corresponding barrenness, aridity, and repulsiveness, in the rigid forms of their technical language. But however offensive to genial sensibilities, this diction was a perfect thing in its kind; and, to do it justice, we ought rather to compare it with the exquisite language of algebra, equally irreconcilable to all standards of æsthetic beauty; but yet for the three qualities of elliptical rapidity (that rapidity which constitutes very much of what is meant by *elegance* in mathematics), of absolute precision, and of simplicity, this algebraic language is unrivalled amongst human

inventions. On the other hand, the Greeks, whose objects did not confine them to these austere studies, carried out their corresponding excellence in style upon a far wider and indeed a comprehensive scale. Almost all modes of style were exemplified amongst *them*. Thus we endeavour to show that the subjective pursuits of the Greeks and the schoolmen ought to have favoured a command of appropriate diction; and afterwards that it did.

But, *fourthly*, we are entitled to expect that wherever style exists in great development as a practice, it will soon be investigated with corresponding success as a theory. If fine music is produced spontaneously in short snatches by the musical sensibility of a people, it is a matter of certainty that the science of composition, that counterpoint, that thorough-bass, will soon be cultivated with a commensurate zeal. This is matter of such obvious inference, that in any case where it fails we look for some extraordinary cause to account for it. Now, in Greece, with respect to style, the inference *did* fail. Style, as an art, was in a high state of culture; style, as a science was nearly neglected. How is this to be accounted for? It arose naturally enough out of one great phenomenon in the condition of ancient times, and the relation which that bore to literature and to all human exertion of the intellect.

Did the reader ever happen to reflect on the great idea of *publication*? An idea we call it; because even in our own times, with all the mechanic aids of steam-presses, etc., this object is most imperfectly approached, and is destined, perhaps, for ever to remain an unattainable ideal; useful (like all ideals) in the way of regulating our aims, but also as a practicable object not reconcilable with the limitation of human power. For it is clear, that if books were multiplied by a thousand-fold, and truth of all kinds were carried to the very fireside of every family, nay, placed below the eyes of every individual, still the purpose of any universal publication would be defeated and utterly confounded, were it only by the limited opportunities of readers. One condition of publication defeats another. Even so much as a general publication is a hopeless idea. Yet, on the other hand, publication in some degree, and by some mode, is a *sine qua non* condition for the generation of literature. Without a larger sympathy than that of his own personal circle, it is evident that no writer could have a motive for those exertions and previous preparations, without which excellence is not attainable in any art whatsoever.

Now, in our own times, it is singular, and really philosophically curious, to remark the utter blindness of writers, readers, publishers, and all parties whatever interested in literature, as to the

trivial fraction of publicity which settles upon each separate work. The very multiplication of books has continually defeated the object in a growing progression. Readers have increased, the engines of publication have increased; but books, increasing in a still greater proportion, have left as the practical result — an average quotient of publicity for each book, taken apart, continually decreasing. And if the whole world were readers, probably the average publicity for each separate work would reach a *minimum;* such would be the concurrent increase of books. But even this view of the case keeps out of sight the most monstrous forms of this phenomenon. The inequality of the publication has the effect of keeping very many books absolutely without a reader. The majority of books are never opened; five hundred copies may be printed, or half as many more; of these it may happen that five are carelessly turned over. Popular journals, again, which carry a promiscuous miscellany of papers into the same number of hands, as a stage-coach must convey all its passengers at the same rate of speed, dupe the public with a notion that here at least all are read. Not at all. One or two are read from the interest attached to their subjects. Occasionally one is read a little from the ability with which it treats a subject not otherwise attractive. The rest have a better chance certainly than

books, because they are at any rate placed under the eye and in the hand of readers. But this is no more than a variety of the same case. A hasty glance may be taken by one in a hundred at the less attractive papers; but reading is out of the question. Then, again, another delusion, by which all parties disguise the truth, is the absurd belief that not being read at present a book may, however, be revived hereafter. Believe it not! This is possible only with regard to books that demand to be studied, where the merit is slowly discovered. Every month, every day indeed, produces its own novelties, with the additional zest that they *are* novelties. Every future year, which will assuredly fail in finding time for its own books, how should it find time for defunct books? No, no; every year buries its own literature. Since Waterloo, there have been added upwards of fifty thousand books and pamphlets to the shelves of our *native* literature, taking no account of foreign importations. Of these fifty thousand, possibly two hundred still survive; possibly twenty will survive for a couple of centuries; possibly five or six thousand may have been indifferently read; the rest not so much as opened. In this hasty sketch of a calculation, we assume a single copy to represent a whole edition. But in order to have the total sum of copies numerically neglected since Waterloo, it

will be requisite to multiply forty-four thousand by five hundred at the least, but probably by a higher multiplier. At the very moment of writing this—by way of putting into a brighter light the inconceivable blunder as to publicity habitually committed by sensible men of the world—let us mention what we now see before us in a public journal. Speaking with disapprobation of a just but disparaging expression applied to the French war-mania by a London morning paper, the writer has described it as likely to irritate the people of France. O genius of arithmetic! The offending London journal has a circulation of four thousand copies daily, and it is assumed that thirty-three millions, of whom assuredly not twenty-five individuals will ever see the English paper as a visible object, nor five ever read the passage in question, are to be maddened by one word in a colossal paper laid this morning on a table amongst fifty others, and to-morrow morning pushed off that table by fifty others of more recent date. How are such delusions possible? Simply from the previous delusion, of ancient standing, connected with printed characters: what is printed seems to every man invested with some fatal character of publicity such as cannot belong to mere MS.; whilst, in the mean time, out of every thousand printed pages, one at the most, but at all events a very small proportion indeed, is in any true sense

more public when printed than previously as a manuscript; and that one, even that thousandth part, perishes so effectually in a few days to each separate reader, as the words perish in our daily conversation. Out of all that we talk, or hear others talk, through the course of a year, how much remains on the memory at the closing day of December? Quite as little, we may be sure, survives from most people's reading. A book answers its purpose by sustaining the intellectual faculties in motion through the current act of reading, and a general deposition or settling takes effect from the sum of what we read; even that, however, chiefly according to the previous condition in which the book finds us for understanding it, and referring them to heads under some existing arrangement of our knowledge. Publication is an idle term applied to what is not published; and nothing is *published* which is not made known *publicly* to the understanding as well as to the eye; whereas, for the enormous majority of what is printed, we cannot say so much as that it is made known to the eyes.

For what reason have we insisted on this unpleasant view of a phenomenon incident to the limitation of our faculties, and apparently without remedy? Upon another occasion, it might have been useful to do so, were it only to impress upon every writer the vast importance of compression.

Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably increase the disposable time of the public by one twelfth part; in other words, would add another month to the year, or raise any sum of volumes read from eleven to twelve hundred. A mechanic operation would effect *that* change; but, by cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of each three might be pruned away; and the amount of possible publication might thus be increased in a threefold degree. A most serious duty therefore, and a duty which is annually growing in solemnity, appears to be connected with the culture of an unwordy diction; much more, however, with the culture of clear thinking; that being the main key to good writing and consequently to fluent reading.

But all this, though not unconnected with our general theme, is wide of our immediate purpose. The course of our logic at this point runs in the following order. The Athenians, from causes assigned, ought to have consummated the whole science and theory of style. But they did *not*. Why? Simply from a remarkable deflexion or bias given to their studies by a difficulty connected with *publication*. For some modes of literature the Greeks *had* a means of publication, for many they had *not*. That one difference, as

we shall show, disturbed the just valuation of style.

Some mode of publication must have existed for Athens, that is evident. The mere *fact* of a literature proves it. For without public sympathy how can a literature arise? or public sympathy without a regular organ of publication? What poet would submit to the labours of his most difficult art, if he had no reasonable prospect of a large audience, and somewhat of a permanent audience to welcome and adopt his productions?

Now then, in the Athens of Pericles, what *was* the audience, how composed, and how insured, on which the literary composer might rely? By what channel, in short, did the Athenian writer calculate on a *publication*?

This is a very interesting question; and, as regards much in the civilisation of Greece, both for what it caused and what it prevented, is an important question. In the elder days, in fact we may suppose through the five hundred years from the Trojan expedition to Pisistratus and Solon, all *publication* was effected through two classes of men—the public reciters and the public singers. Thus no doubt it was, that the Iliad and Odyssey were sent down to the hands of Pisistratus, who has the traditional reputation of having first arranged and revised these poems. These reciters

or singers to the harp, would probably rehearse one entire book of the Iliad at every splendid banquet. Every book would be kept in remembrance and currency by the peculiar local relations of particular states or particular families to ancestors connected with Troy. This mode of publication, however, had the disadvantage, that it was among the arts ministerial to sensual enjoyment. And it is some argument for the extensive diffusion of such a practice in the early times of Greece, that both in the Greece of later times, and, by adoption from her, in the Rome of cultivated ages, we find the ακροαματα as commonly established by way of a dinner appurtenance—that is, exercises of display addressed to the ear, recitations of any kind with and without music—not at all less frequently than ὁραματα, or the corresponding display to the eye (dances or combats of gladiators). These were doubtless inheritances from the ancient usages of Greece, modes of publication resorted to long before the Olympic games, by the mere necessitous cravings for sympathy; and kept up long after that institution, as in itself too brief and rare in its recurrence to satisfy the necessity.

Such was the earliest effort of publication, and in its feeble infancy; for this, besides its limitation in point of audience, was confined to narrative poetry. But when the ideal of Greece was more and

more exalted by nearer comparison with barbarous standards, after the sentiment of patriotism had coalesced with vindictive sentiments, and when towering cities began to reflect the grandeur of this land as in a visual mirror, these cravings for publicity became more restless and irrepressible. And at length in the time of Pericles, concurrently with the external magnificence of the city, arose for Athens two modes of publication, each upon a scale of gigantic magnitude.

What were these? The *Theatre* and the *Agora* or Forum; publication by the Stage, and publication by the Hustings. These were the extraordinary modes of publication which arose for Athens; one by a sudden birth, like that of Minerva, in the very generation of Pericles; the other slowly maturing itself from the generation of Pisistratus, which preceded that of Pericles by a hundred years. This double publication, scenic and forensic, was virtually, and for all the loftier purposes of publication, the press of Athens. And however imperfect a representative this may seem of a typographical publication, certain it is that in some important features the Athenian publication had separate advantages of its own. It was a far more effective and correct publication in the first place, enjoying every aid of powerful accompaniment from voice, gesture, scenery, music, and suffering in no instance from false

reading or careless reading. Then, secondly, it was a far wider publication; each drama being read (or heard, which is a far better thing) by 25,000 or 30,000 persons, counterbalancing at least forty editions, such as we on an average publish, each oration being delivered with just emphasis to perhaps 7000. But why, in this mention of a stage or hustings publication, as opposed to a publication by the printing-press, why was it, we are naturally admonished to ask, that the Greeks had no press? The ready answer will be, because the art of printing had not been discovered. But that is an error, the detection of which we owe to the present Archbishop of Dublin. The art of printing *was* discovered. It had been discovered repeatedly. The art which multiplied the legends upon a coin or medal (a work which the ancients performed by many degrees better than we moderns, for we make it a mechanic art, they a fine art) had in effect anticipated the art of printing. It was an art, this typographic mystery, which awoke and went back to sleep many times over from mere defect of materials. Not the defect of typography as an art, but the defect of *păper* as a material for keeping this art in motion; *there* lay the reason, as Dr. Whately most truly observes, why printed books had no existence amongst the Greeks of Pericles, or afterwards amongst the Romans of

Cicero. And why was there no paper? The common reason applying to both countries was the want of linen rags, and that want arose from the universal habit of wearing woollen garments. In this respect, Athens and Rome were on the same level. But for Athens the want was driven to a further extremity by the slenderness of her commerce with Egypt, whence only any substitute could have been drawn.

Even for Rome itself the scarcity of paper ran through many degrees. Horace, the poet, was amused with the town of Equotuticum for two reasons; as incapable of entering into hexameter verse from its prosodial quantity (*versu quod dicere non est*), and because it purchased water (*vœnit vilissima rerum aqua*), a circumstance in which it agrees with the well-known Clifton, above the hot wells of Bristol, where water is bought by the shilling's worth. But neither Horatian Equotuticum, nor Bristolian Clifton, can ever have been as "hard up" for water as the Mecca caravan. And the differences were as great, in respect to the want of paper, between the Athens of Pericles or Alexander, and the Rome of Augustus Cæsar. Athens had bad poets, whose names have come down to modern times; but Athens could no more have afforded to punish bad authors by sending their works to grocers—

"... in vicum vendentem pus et odores,
Et piper, et quicquid *chartis amicitur ineptis*—

than London, because gorged with the wealth of two Indies, can afford to pave her streets with silver. This practice of applying unsaleable authors to the ignoble uses of retail dealers in petty articles, must have existed in Rome for some time before it could have attracted the notice of Horace, and upon some considerable scale as a known public usage, before it could have roused any echoes of public mirth as a satiric allusion, or have had any meaning and sting.

In that one revelation of Horace, we see a proof how much paper had become more plentiful. It is true that so long as men dressed in woollen materials, it was impossible to look for a *cheap* paper. Maga might have been printed at Rome very well for ten guineas a copy. Paper was dear, undoubtedly, but it could be had. On the other hand, how desperate must have been the bankruptcy at Athens in all materials for receiving the record of thoughts, when we find a polished people having no better tickets or cards for conveying their sentiments to the public than shells! Thence came the very name for civil banishment, viz., *ostracism*, because the votes were marked on an *ostracon*, or marine shell. Again, in another great city, viz., Syracuse, you see men reduced to *petalism*, or marking their votes by the petals of shrubs. Elsewhere, as indeed many

centuries nearer to our own times, in Constantinople, bull's hide was used for the same purpose.

Well might the poor Greeks adopt the desperate expedient of white plastered walls as the best memorandum-book for a man who had thoughts occurring to him in the night-time. Brass only, or marble, could offer any lasting memorial for thoughts; and upon what material the parts were written out for the actors on the Athenian stage, or how the elaborate revisals of the text could be carried on, is beyond our power of conjecture.

In this appalling state of embarrassment for the great poet or prose writer, what consequences would naturally arise? A king's favourite and friend like Aristotle might command the most costly materials. For instance, if you look back from this day to 1800, into the advertising records or catalogues of great Parisian publishers, you will find more works of excessive luxury, costing from a thousand *francs* for each copy, all the way up to as many *guineas*, in each separate period of fifteen years, than in the whole forty among the wealthier and more enterprising publishers of Great Britain. What is the explanation? Can the very moderate incomes of the French gentry afford to patronize works which are beyond the purses of our British aristocracy, who, besides, are so much more of a reading class? Not so: the patronage for these Parisian works of luxury

is not domestic, it is exotic; chiefly from emperors and kings; from great national libraries; from rich universities; from the grandees of Russia, Hungary, or Great Britain; and generally from those who, living in splendid castles or hotels, require corresponding furniture, and therefore corresponding books; because to such people books are necessarily furniture; since upon the principles of good taste, they must correspond with the splendour of all around them. And in the age of Alexander, there were already purchasers enough among royal houses, or the imitators of such houses, to encourage costly copies of attractive works. Aristotle was a privileged man. But in other less favoured cases, the strong yearnings for public sympathy were met by blank impossibilities. Much martyrdom we feel assured, was then suffered by poets. Thousands, it is true, perish in our days, who have never had a solitary reader. But still, the existence *in print* gives a delusive feeling that they *may* have been read. They are standing in the market all day, and somebody, unperceived by themselves, may have thrown an eye upon their wares. The thing is possible. But for the ancient writer there was a sheer physical impossibility that any man should sympathize with what he never could have seen, except under the two conditions we have mentioned.

These two cases there were of exemption from this dire physical resistance; two conditions which made publication possible: and under the horrible circumstances of sequestration for authors in general, need it be said, that to benefit by either advantage was sought with such a zeal as, in effect, extinguished all other literature? If a man could be a poet for the stage, a *scriptor scenicus*, in that case he was published. If a man could be admitted as an orator, as a regular *demagogus*, upon the popular *bema* or hustings, in that case he was published. If his own thoughts were a torment to him, until they were reverberated from the hearts and flashing eyes and clamorous sympathy of a multitude; thus only an outlet was provided, a mouth was opened, for the volcano surging within his brain. The vast theatre was an organ of publication; the political forum was an organ of publication. And on this twofold arena a torch was applied to that inflammable gas, which exhaled spontaneously from so excitable a mind as the mind of the Athenian.

Need we wonder, then, at the torrent-like determination with which Athenian literature, from the era 444 B.C. to the era 333 B.C., ran headlong into one or other channel,—the scenical poetry or the eloquence of the hustings? For an Athenian in search of popular applause or of sympathy, there was no other avenue to either;

unless, indeed, in the character of an artist, or of a leading soldier: but too often, in this latter class, it happened that mercenary foreigners had a preference. And thus it was, that during that period when the popular cast of government throughout Greece awakened patriotic emulation, scarcely anything is heard of in literature (allowing for the succession to philosophic chairs, which made it their pride to be private and exclusive) except dramatic poetry on the one hand, comic or tragic, and political oratory on the other.

As to this last avenue to the public ear, how it was abused, in what excess it became the nuisance and capital scourge of Athens, there needs only the testimony of all contemporary men who happened to stand aloof from that profession, or all subsequent men even of that very profession, who were not blinded by some corresponding interest in some similar system of delusion. Euripides and Aristophanes, contemporary with the earliest practitioners of name and power on that stage of jugglers, are overrun with expressions of horror for these public pests. "You have every qualification," says Aristophanes to an aspirant, "that could be wished for a public orator; φωνη μιαρα a voice like seven devils; κακος γεγονας—you are by nature a scamp; αγοραιος ει—you are up to snuff in the business of the forum." From Euripides might be gathered a small volume,

relying merely upon so much of his works as yet survives, in illustration of the horror which possessed him for this gang of public misleaders:—

> Τουτ' εσθ' ὁ θνητων ευ πολεις οικουμενας
> Δομους τ' απολλυτ'—οἱ καλοι λιαν λογοι.

"This is what overthrows cities, admirably organized, and the households of men; your superfine harangues." Cicero, full four centuries later, looking back to this very period from Pericles to Alexander, friendly as he was by the *esprit de corps* to the order of orators, and professionally biassed to uphold the civil uses of eloquence; yet, as an honest man, cannot deny that it was this gift of oratory, hideously abused, which led to the overthrow of Athens and the ruin of Grecian liberty: "Illa vetus Grecia, quæ quondam opibus, imperio, gloriâ floruit, hoc uno malo concidit; *libertate immoderatâ ac licentiâ concionum.*" Quinctilian, standing on the very same ground of professional prejudice, all in favour of public orators, yet is forced into the same sorrowful confession. In one of the declamations ascribed to him he says, "Civitatum status scimus ab oratoribus esse conversos;" and in illustration he adds the example of Athens: "sive illam Atheniensium civitatem (quondam late principem), intueri placeat, accisas ejus vires animadvertemus *vitio concionantium.*" Root and branch Athens

was laid prostrate by her wicked radical orators; for radical,' in the elliptic phrase of modern politics, they were almost to a man; and in this feature above all others (a feature often scornfully exposed by Euripides), those technically known as *οἱ λεγοντες*, the speaking men, and as *οἱ δημαγωγοι*,* the misleaders of the mob, offer a most suitable ancestry for the modern leaders of radicalism; that with their base, fawning flatteries of the people, they mixed up the venom of vipers against their opponents and against the aristocracy of the land.

*Ὑπογλυκαινειν ῥηματιοις μαγειρικοις—*

"Subtly to wheedle the people with honeyed words dressed to its palate:" this had been the ironical advice of the scoffing Aristophanes. That practice made the mob orator contemptible to manly tastes rather than hateful. But the sacrifice of independence—the "pride which licks the dust"—is the readiest training for all uncharita-

* With respect to the word "demagogues," as a technical designation for the political orators and partisans at Athens (otherwise called *οἱ προστατται*, those who headed any movement), it is singular that so accurate a Greek scholar as Henry Stephens should have supposed *linguas promptas ad plebem concitandum* (an expression of Livy's) *potius των δημαγωγων fuisse quàm των ῥητορων*; as if the demagogues were a separate class from the popular orators. But, says Valckenaer, the relation is soon stated: not all the Athenian orators were demagogues, but all the demagogues were in fact, and technically were called orators.

bleness and falsehood towards those who seem either rivals for the same base purposes, or open antagonists for nobler. And accordingly it is remarked by Euripides, that these pestilent abusers of the popular confidence would bring a mischief upon Athens before they had finished, equally by their sycophancies to the mob, and by their libels of foreign princes. Hundreds of years afterwards, a Greek writer, upon reviewing this most interesting period of one hundred and eleven years, from Pericles to Alexander, sums up and repeats the opinion of Euripides in this general representative portrait of Attic oratory, with respect to which we wish to ask, Can any better delineation be given of a Chartist, or generally of a modern Jacobin? —'Ο δημαγωγος κακοδιδασκαλει τους πολλους, λεγων τα κεχαρισμενα—" The mob-leader dupes the multitude with false doctrines, whilst delivering things soothing to their credulous vanity." This is one half of his office, sycophancy to the immediate purseholders, and poison to the sources of truth; the other half is expressed with the same spirit of prophecy as regards the British future, και διαβολαις αυτους εξαλλοτριοι προς τους αριστους, —"and by lying calumnies he utterly alienates them in relation to their own native aristocracy."

Now this was a base pursuit, though somewhat relieved by the closing example of Demosthenes, who, amidst much frailty, had a generous nature;

and he showed it chiefly by his death, and in his lifetime, to use Milton's words, by uttering many times "odious truth," which, with noble courage, he compelled the mob to hear. But one man could not redeem a national dishonour. It *was* such, and such it was felt to be. Men, therefore, of elevated natures, and men of gentle pacific natures, equally revolted from a trade of lies, as regarded the audience, and of strife, as regarded the competitors. There remained the one other pursuit of scenical poetry; and it hardly needs to be said, what crowding there was amongst all the energetic minds of Athens into one or other of these pursuits; the one for the unworldly and idealizing, the other for the coarsely ambitious. These, therefore, became the two *quasi* professions of Athens; and at the same time, in a sense more exclusive than can now be true of *our* professions, became the sole means of publication for truth of any class, and a publication by many degrees more certain, more extensive, and more immediate, than ours by the press.

The Athenian theatre published an edition of thirty thousand copies in one day, enabling, in effect, every male citizen capable of attending, from the age of twenty to sixty, together with many thousands of domiciled aliens, to read the drama, with the fullest understanding of its sense and poetic force that could be effected by natural

powers of voice and action, combined with all possible auxiliaries of art, of music, of pantomimic dancing; and the whole carried home to the heart by visible and audible sympathy in excess. This, but in a very inferior form, as regarded the adjuncts of art, and the scale of the theatre, and the *mise en scène*, was precisely the advantage of Charles I. for appreciating Shakspere.

It was a standing reproach of the Puritans adopted even by Milton, a leaden shaft, feathered and made buoyant by *his* wit, that the king had adopted that stage poet as the companion of his closet retirements. So it would have been a pity if these malignant persecutors of the royal solitude should have been liars as well as fanatics. Doubtless even when king, and in his afflictions, this storm-vexed man did read Shakspere. But that was not the original way in which he acquired his acquaintance with the poet. A Prince of Wales, what between public claims and social claims, finds little time for reading after the period of childhood; that is, at any period when he can comprehend a great poet. And it was as Prince of Wales that Charles prosecuted his studies of Shakspere. He saw continually at Whitehall, personated by the best actors of the time, illustrated by the stage management, and assisted by the mechanical displays of Inigo Jones, all the principal dramas of Shakspere actually performed.

That was publication with an Athenian advantage. A thousand copies of a book may be brought into public libraries, and not one of them opened. But the three thousand copies of a play, which Drury Lane used to publish in one night, were in the most literal sense as well as in spirit read, properly punctuated by the speakers, made intelligible by voice and action endowed with life and emphasis; in short, on each successive performance, a very large edition of a fine tragedy was published in the most impressive sense of publication; not merely with accuracy, but with a mimic reality that forbade all forgetting, and was liable to no inattention.

"Now if Drury Lane published a drama for Shakspere by three thousand copies in one night, the Athenian theatre published ten times that amount for Sophocles. And this mode of publication in Athens not co-operating (as in modern times) with other modes, but standing out in solitary conspicuous relief, gave an artificial bounty upon that one mode of poetic composition; as the hustings did upon one mode of prose composition. And these two modes, being thus cultivated to the utter exclusion of others which did not benefit by that bounty of publication, gave an unnatural bias to the national style; determined, in effect, upon too narrow a scale the operative ideal of composition; and finally made the dramatic

artist and the mob orator the two sole intellectual professions for Athens. Hence came a great limitation of style in practice; and hence, secondly, for reasons connected with these two modes of composition, a general neglect of style as a didactic theory.

NOTE.—Amongst the vicarious modes of publication resorted to by the Ancients, in default of the printing press, I have forgotten the Roman recitations in the porticoes of baths, etc.

# RHETORIC.

# RHETORIC.*

NO art cultivated by man has suffered more in the revolutions of taste and opinion than the art of rhetoric. There was a time when, by an undue extension of this term, it designated the whole cycle of accomplishments which prepared a man for public affairs. From that height it has descended to a level with the arts of alchemy and astrology, as holding out promises which consist in a mixed degree of impostures wherever its pretensions happened to be weighty, and of trifles wherever they happened to be true. If we look into the prevailing theory of rhetoric, under which it meets with so degrading an estimate, we shall find that it fluctuates between two different conceptions, according to one of which it is an art of ostentatious ornament, and according to the other an art of sophistry. A man is held to play the rhetorician, when he treats a subject with more than usual gaiety of ornament; and perhaps we may add, as an essential element in

* Suggested as an excursive review, by Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric.*

the idea, with *conscious* ornament. This is one view of rhetoric; and under this what it accomplishes is not so much to persuade as to delight; not so much to win the assent, as to stimulate the attention and captivate the taste. And even this purpose is attached to something separable and accidental in the *manner*.

But the other idea of rhetoric lays its foundation in something essential to the *matter*. This is that rhetoric of which Milton spoke, as able "to dash maturest counsels, and to make the worse appear the better reason." Now it is clear, that *argument* of some quality or other must be taken as the principle of this rhetoric; for those must be immature counsels indeed that could be dashed by mere embellishments of manner, or by artifices of diction and arrangement.

Here then we have in popular use two separate ideas of rhetoric, one of which is occupied with the general end of the fine arts; that is to say, intellectual pleasure. The other applies itself more specifically to a definite purpose of utility, viz., fraud.

Such is the popular idea of rhetoric, which wants both unity and precision. If we seek these from the formal teachers of rhetoric, our embarrassment is not much relieved. All of them agree that rhetoric may be defined *the art of persuasion*. But if we inquire what *is* persuasion,

we find them vague and indefinite or even contradictory. To waive a thousand of others, Dr. Whately, in the work before us, insists upon the *conviction* of the understanding as "an essential part of persuasion;" and, on the other hand, the author of the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* is equally satisfied that there is no persuasion without an appeal to the *passions*. Here are two views. We, for our parts, have a third which excludes both: where conviction begins, the field of rhetoric ends; that is our opinion: and, as to the passions, we contend that they are not within the province of rhetoric but of eloquence.

In this view of rhetoric and its functions we coincide with Aristotle; as indeed originally we took it up on a suggestion derived from him. But as all parties may possibly fancy a confirmation of their views in Aristotle, we will say a word or two in support of our own interpretation of that author, which will surprise our Oxford friends. Our explanation involves a very remarkable detection, which will tax many thousands of books with error in a particular point supposed to be as well established as the hills. We question, indeed, whether any fulminating powder, descending upon the schools of Oxford, would cause more consternation than the explosion of that novelty which we are going to discharge.

Many years ago, when studying the Aristotelian rhetoric at Oxford, it struck us that, by whatever name Aristotle might describe the main purpose of rhetoric, practically, at least, in his own treatment of it, he threw the whole stress upon finding such arguments for any given thesis as, without positively proving or disproving it, should give it a colourable support. It could not be by accident that the topics, or general heads of argument, were never in an absolute and unconditional sense true, but contained so much of plausible or colourable truth as is expressed in the original meaning of the word *probable*. A *ratio probabilis*, in the Latin use of the word *probabilis*, is that ground of assent—not which the understanding can solemnly approve and abide by—but the very opposite to this; one which it can submit to for a moment, and countenance as within the limits of the plausible.* That this was the real governing law of Aristotle's procedure it was not possible to doubt: but was it consciously known to himself? If so, how was it to be reconciled with his own formal account of the office of rhetoric, so often repeated, that it consisted in finding enthymemes? What then was an enthymeme?

* It is ludicrous to see the perplexity of some translators and commentators of the Rhetoric, who, having read it under a false point of view, labour to defend it on that footing. On its real footing it needs no defence.

Oxford! thou wilt think us mad to ask. Certainly we knew, what all the world knows, that an enthymeme was understood to be a syllogism of which one proposition is suppressed—major, minor, or conclusion. But what possible relation had *that* to rhetoric? Nature sufficiently prompts all men to that sort of ellipsis; and what impertinence in a teacher to build his whole system upon a solemn precept to do this or that, when the rack would not have forced any man to do otherwise! Besides, Aristotle had represented it as the fault of former systems, that they applied themselves exclusively to the treatment of the passions—an object foreign to the purpose of the rhetorician, who, in some situations, is absolutely forbidden by law to use any such arts: whereas, says he, his true and universal weapon is the enthymeme, which is open to him everywhere. Now what opposition, or what relation of any kind, can be imagined between the system which he rejects and the one he adopts, if the enthymeme is to be understood as it usually has been? The rhetorician is not to address the passions, but —what? to mind that in all his arguments he suppresses one of his propositions! And these follies are put into the mouth of Aristotle!

In this perplexity a learned Scottish friend*

* This "learned Scottish friend" was the late Sir William Hamilton. It was in the summer before Waterloo, viz., in

communicated to us an Essay of Facciolati's, read publicly about a century ago (Nov. 1724), and entitled *De Enthymemate,** in which he maintains, that the received idea of the enthymeme is a total blunder, and triumphantly restores the lost idea. "Nego," says he, "nego enthymema esse syllogismum mutilum, ut vulgo dialectici docent. Nego, inquam, et pernego enthymema enunciatione unâ et conclusione constare, quamvis ita in scholis omnibus finiatur, et a nobis ipsis finitum sit aliquando—nolentibus extra locum lites suscipere." *I deny, says he, that the enthymeme properly understood is a truncated syllogism, as commonly is taught by dialecticians. I deny, let me repeat; peremptorily and furiously I deny that the enthymeme consists of one premiss and the conclusion: although that doctrine has been laid down universally in the schools, and upon one occasion even by myself, as unwilling to move the question prematurely or out of its natural place.*

Facciolati is not the least accurate of logicians, because he may chance to be the most elegant. Yet, we apprehend, that at such innovations,

the summer of 1814, that I first became acquainted with him; in fact forty-five years ago, on this 20th day of March 1859, from which I date my hurried revision of this paper, entitled *Rhetoric.*

* It stands at p. 227 of *Jacobi Facciolata Orationes XII., Acroases, &c. Patavii*, 1729. This is the second Italian edition, and was printed at the University Press.

Smiglecius will stir in his grave; Keckermannus will groan; "Dutch* Burgersdyk" will snort; and English Crackenthorpius (who has the honour to be an ancestor of Mr. Wordsworth), though buried for two centuries, will revisit the glimpses of the moon. And really, if the question were for a name, Heaven forbid that we should disturb the peace of logicians: they might have leave to say, as of the Strid in Wharfdale,

> "It has borne that name a thousand years,
> And shall a thousand more."

But, whilst the name is abused, the idea perishes. Facciolati undoubtedly is right: nor is he the first who has observed the error. Julius Pacius, who understood Aristotle better than any man that ever lived, had long before remarked it. The arguments of Facciolati we will give below;†

* "*Dutch Burgersdyk*:" Pope in the *Dunciad*. The other names, if qualified apparently to frighten a horse, are all real names of men who did business in logic some 250 and 200 years ago, and were really no pretenders, though unhappily both grim and grimy in the impertinent estimates of contemporary women.

† Upon an innovation of such magnitude, and which will be so startling to scholars, it is but fair, that Facciolati should have the benefit of all his own arguments: and we have therefore resolved to condense them. 1. He begins with that very passage (or one of them) on which the received idea of the Enthymeme most relies; and from this he derives an argument for the new idea. The passage is to this effect, that the enthymeme is composed ἐκ πολλαχις ἐλαττονων ἡ ἐξ ὡν ὁ συλλογισμος—*i.e.*, *frequently* consists of fewer parts than the

it may be sufficient here to state the result. An enthymeme differs from a syllogism, not in the

syllogism. *Frequently!* What logic is there in *that?* Can it be imagined, that so rigorous a logician as Aristotle would notice, as a circumstance of frequent occurrence in an enthymeme, what, by the received doctrine, should be its mere essence and differential principle? To say that this happens frequently, is to say, by implication, that sometimes it does *not* happen—*i.e.*, that it is an accident, and no part of the definition, since it may thus confessedly be absent, *salva ratione conceptus.* 2. Waiving this argument, and supposing the suppression of one proposition to be even universal in the enthymeme, still it would be an impertinent circumstance, and (philosophically speaking) an accident. Could it be tolerated, that a great systematic distinction (for such it is in Aristotle) should rest upon a mere abbreviation of convenience? "Quasi vero argumentandi ratio et natura varietur, cum brevius effertur;" whereas Aristotle himself tells us that "οὐ προς τον ἐξω λογον ἡ ἀποδειξις, ἀλλα προς τον ἐν τῃ ψυχῃ." 3. From a particular passage in the 2d book of the Prior Analytics (chap. 27), generally interpreted in a way to favour the existing account of the enthymeme, after first of all showing, that under a more accurate construction it is incompatible with that account, whilst it is in perfect harmony with the new one, Facciolati deduces an explanation of that accidental peculiarity in the enthymeme, which has attracted such undue attention as to eclipse its true characteristic: the peculiarity, we mean, of being entitled (though not, as the common idea is, required) to suppress one proposition. So much we shall here anticipate, as to say, that this privilege arises out of the peculiar *matter* of the enthymeme, which fitted it for the purposes of the rhetorician; and these purposes being loose and popular, brought with them proportionable indulgences; whereas the syllogism, technically so called, employing a severer matter, belonged peculiarly to the dialectician, or philosophic disputant, whose purposes, being rigorous and scientific, imposed much closer restrictions; and one of these was, that he should in no case suppress any

accident of suppressing one of its propositions; either may do this, or neither; the difference is

proposition, however obvious, but should formally enunciate all: just as in the debating schools of later ages it has always been the rule, that before urging his objection, the opponent should repeat the respondent's syllogism. Hence, although the rhetorician naturally used his privilege, and enthymemes were in fact generally shorn of one proposition (and *vice versa* with respect to syllogisms in the strict philosophic sense), yet was all this a mere effect of usage and accident; and it was very possible for an enthymeme to have its full complement of parts, whilst a syllogism might be defective in the very way which is falsely supposed to be of the essence of an enthymeme. 4. He derives an argument from an inconsistency with which Aristotle has been thought chargeable under the old idea of the enthymeme, and with which Gassendi has in fact charged him.† 5. He meets and rebuts the force of a principal argument in favour of the enthymeme as commonly understood, viz., that in a particular part of the Prior Analytics, the enthymeme is called συλλογισμος ἀτελης —an *imperfect* syllogism, which word the commentators generally expound by "*mutilus atque imminutus.*" Here he uses the assistance of the excellent J. Pace, whom he justly describes as "virum Græcarum litterarum peritissimum, philosophum in primis bonum, et Aristotelis interpretum quot sunt, quotque fuerunt, quotque futuri sunt, longe præstantissimum." This admirable commentator, so indispensable to all who would study the *Organon* and the Περι Ψυχης, had himself originally started that hypothesis which we are now reporting, as long afterwards adopted and improved by Facciolati. Considering the unrivalled qualifications of Pace, this of itself is a great argument on our side.

† However, as in reality the whole case was one of mere misapprehension on the part of Gassendi, and has, in fact, nothing at all to do with the nature of the enthymeme, well or ill understood, Facciolati takes nothing by this particular argument, which, however, we have retained, to make our analysis complete.

essential, and in the nature of the *matter*; that of the syllogism proper being certain and apodeictic; that of the enthymeme, simply probable, and drawn from the province of opinion.

This theory tallies exactly with our own previous construction of Aristotle's rhetoric, and explains the stress which he had laid at the outset upon enthymemes. Whatsoever is certain, or matter of fixed science, can be no subject for the rhetorician: where it is possible for the understanding to be convinced, no field is open for rhetorical persuasion. Absolute certainty and fixed science transcend opinion, and exclude the probable. The province of rhetoric, whether meant for an influence upon the actions, or simply upon the belief, lies amongst that vast field of cases where there is a *pro* and a *con*, with the chance of right and wrong, true and false, distributed in varying proportions between them.

The objection before us, from the word ἀτελής, Pace disposes of briefly and conclusively: *first*, he says, that the word is wanting in four MSS.; and he has no doubt himself "quin ex glossemate irrepserit in contextum:" *secondly*, the Latin translators and schoolmen, as Agricola and many others, take no notice of this word in their versions and commentaries: *thirdly*, the Greek commentators, such as Joannes Grammaticus and Alexander Aphrodisiensis, clearly had no knowledge of any such use of the word *enthymeme*, as that which has prevailed in later times; which is plain from this, that wherever they have occasion to speak of a syllogism wanting one of its members, they do not in any instance call it an enthymeme, but a συλλογισμον μονοληψματον.

There is also an immense range of truths, where there are no chances at all concerned, but the affirmative and the negative are both true; as, for example, the goodness of human nature and its wickedness; the happiness of human life and its misery; the charms of knowledge, and its hollowness; the fragility of human prosperity, in the eye of religious meditation, and its security, as estimated by worldly confidence and youthful hope. In all such cases the rhetorician exhibits his art by giving an impulse to one side, and by withdrawing the mind so steadily from all thoughts or images which support the other, as to leave it practically under the possession of a one-sided estimate.

Upon this theory, what relation to rhetoric shall we assign to style and the ornamental arts of composition? In some respect, they seem liable to the same objection as that which Aristotle has urged against appeals to the passions; both are extra-essential, or ἐξω του πραγματος; they are subjective arts, not objective; that is, they do not affect the thing which is to be surveyed, but the eye of him who is to survey. Yet, at a banquet, the epicure holds himself not more obliged to the cook for the venison, than to the physician who braces his stomach to enjoy. And any arts which conciliate regard to the speaker, indirectly promote the effect of his arguments. On this account,

and because (under the severest limitation of rhetoric) they are in many cases indispensable to the perfect interpretation of the thoughts, we may admit arts of style and ornamental composition as the ministerial part of rhetoric. But with regard to the passions, as contended for by Dr. Campbell, it is a sufficient answer that they are already pre-occupied by what is called *Eloquence.*

Coleridge, as we have often heard, is in the habit of drawing the line with much philosophical beauty between rhetoric and eloquence. On this topic we were never so fortunate as to hear him: but if we are here called upon for a distinction, we shall satisfy our immediate purpose by a very plain and brief one. By Eloquence, we understand the overflow of powerful feelings upon occasions fitted to excite them. But Rhetoric is the art of aggrandizing and bringing out into strong relief, by means of various and striking thoughts, some aspect of truth which of itself is supported by no spontaneous feelings, and therefore rests upon artificial aids.

Greece, as may well be imagined, was the birthplace of Rhetoric; to which of the Fine Arts was it not? and here, in one sense of the word Rhetoric, the art had its consummation: for the theory, or *ars docens*, was taught with a fulness and an accuracy by the Grecian masters not afterwards approached. In particular it was so taught

by Aristotle, whose system we are disposed to agree with Dr. Whately in pronouncing the best, as regards the primary purpose of a teacher; though otherwise, for elegance and as a practical model in the art he was expounding, neither Aristotle, nor any less austere among the Greek rhetoricians, has any pretensions to measure himself with Quintilian. In reality, for a triumph over the difficulties of the subject, and as a lesson on the possibility of imparting grace to the treatment of scholastic topics, naturally as intractable as that of Grammar or Prosody, there is no such *chef-d'œuvre* to this hour in any literature, as the Institutions of Quintilian. Laying this one case out of the comparison, however, the Greek superiority was indisputable.

Yet how is it to be explained, that with these advantages on the side of the Greek rhetoric as an *ars docens*, rhetoric as a practical art (the *ars utens*) never made any advances amongst the Greeks to the brilliancy which it attained in Rome? Up to a certain period, and throughout the palmy state of the Greek republics, we may account for it thus: Rhetoric, in its finest and most absolute burnish, may be called an *eloquentia umbratica*; that is, it aims at an elaborate form of beauty which shrinks from the strife of business, and could neither arise nor make itself felt in a tumultuous assembly. Certain features, it is well

known, and peculiar styles of countenance, which are impressive in a drawing room, become ineffective on a public stage. The fine tooling and delicate tracery of the cabinet artist are lost upon a building of colossal proportions. Extemporaneousness, again, a favourable circumstance to impassioned eloquence, is death to Rhetoric. Two characteristics indeed there were, of a Greek popular assembly, which must have operated fatally on the rhetorician—its fervour, in the first place; and, secondly, the coarseness of a real interest. All great rhetoricians in selecting their subject have shunned their determinate cases of real life: and even in the single instance of a deviation from the rule — that of the author (whoever he be) of the Declamations attributed to Quintilian—the cases are shaped with so romantic a generality, and so slightly circumstantiated, as to allow him all the benefit of pure abstractions.

We can readily understand, therefore, why the fervid oratory of the Athenian assemblies, and the intense reality of its interest, should stifle the growth of rhetoric: the smoke, tarnish, and demoniac glare of Vesuvius easily eclipse the pallid coruscations of the aurora borealis. And in fact, amongst the greater orators of Greece, there is not a solitary dream of rhetoric: Isocrates may have a little, being (to say the truth) neither

orator nor rhetorician in any eminent sense; Demosthenes has none. But when those great thunders had subsided which reached "to Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne," when the "fierce democracy" itself had perished, and Greece had fallen under the common circumstances of the Roman empire, how came it that Greek rhetoric did not blossom concurrently with Roman? Vegetate it did; and a rank crop of weeds grew up under the name of Rhetoric, down to the times of the Emperor Julian and his friend Libanius (both of whom, by the way, were as worthless writers as have ever abused the Greek language). But this part of Greek literature is a desert with no oasis. The fact is, if it were required to assign the two bodies of writers who have exhibited the human understanding in the most abject poverty, and whose works by no possibility emit a casual scintillation of wit, fancy, just thinking, or good writing, we should certainly fix upon Greek rhetoricians and Italian critics. Amongst the whole mass there is not a page, that any judicious friend to literature would wish to reprieve from destruction. And in both cases we apprehend that the possibility of so much inanity is due in part to the quality of the two languages. The diffuseness and loose structure of Greek style unfit it for the closeness, condensation, and το αγχιστροφον of rhetoric; the melodious beauty of

the mere sounds, which both in the Italian and in the Greek are combined with much majesty, dwells upon the ear so delightfully, that in no other language is it so easy as in these two to write with little or no meaning, and to flow along through a whole wilderness of inanity, without particularly rousing the reader's disgust.

In the literature of Rome it is that we find the true El Dorado of rhetoric, as we might expect from the sinewy compactness of the language. Livy, and, above all preceding writers, Ovid, display the greatest powers of rhetoric in forms of composition, which were not particularly adapted to favour that talent. The contest of Ajax and Ulysses for the arms of Achilles, in one of the latter books of the *Metamorphoses*, is a *chef-d'œuvre* of rhetoric, considering its metrical form; for metre, and especially the flowing heroic hexameter, is no advantage to the rhetorician.* The two Plinys, Lucan (though again under the disadvantage of verse), Petronius Arbiter, and Quintilian, but above all, the Senecas (for a Spanish cross appears to improve the quality of

* This, added to the style and quality of his poems, makes it the more remarkable, that Virgil should have been deemed a rhetorician. Yet so it was: Walsh notices, in the Life of Virgil which he furnished for his friend Dryden's Translation, that "his (Virgil's) rhetoric was in such general esteem, that lectures were read upon it in the reign of Tiberius, and the subject of declamations taken out of him."

the rhetorician), have left a body of rhetorical composition such as no modern nation has rivalled. Even the most brilliant of these writers, however, were occasionally surpassed in particular *bravuras* of rhetoric by several of the Latin fathers, particularly Tertullian, Arnobius, St. Austin, and a writer whose name we cannot at this moment recall. In fact, a little African blood operated as genially in this respect as Spanish, whilst an Asiatic cross was inevitably fatal, by prompting a diffusion and inflation of style radically hostile to the condensation of keen, arrowy, rhetoric. Partly from this cause, and partly because they wrote in an unfavourable language, the Greek fathers are, one and all, Birmingham rhetoricians. Even Gregory Nazianzen is so, with submission to Messieurs of the Port Royal and other bigoted critics, who have pronounced him at the very top of the tree among the fine writers of antiquity. Undoubtedly he has a turgid style of mouthy grandiloquence (though often the merest bombast); but for polished rhetoric he is singularly unfitted, by inflated habits of thinking, by loitering diffuseness, and a dreadful trick of calling names. The spirit of personal invective is peculiarly adverse to the coolness of rhetoric. As to Chrysostom and Basil, with less of pomp and swagger than Gregory, they have not at all more of rhetorical

burnish and compression. Upon the whole, looking back through the dazzling files of the ancient rhetoricians, we are disposed to rank the Senecas and Tertullian as the leaders of the band; for St. Austin, in his Confessions, and wherever he becomes peculiarly interesting, is apt to be impassioned and fervent in a degree which makes him break out of the proper pace of rhetoric. He is matched to trot, and is continually breaking into a gallop. Indeed, his Confessions have, in parts, particularly in those which relate to the death of his young friend and his own frenzy of grief, all that real passion which is only imagined in the Confessions of Rousseau, under a preconception derived from his known character and unhappy life. By the time of the Emperor Justinian (say A.D. 530), or in the interval between that time and the era of Mahomet (A.D. 620), which interval we regard as the common *crepusculum* between ancient and modern history, all rhetoric (as the professional pretension of a class) seems to have finally expired.

In the literature of modern Europe, rhetoric has been cultivated with success. But this remark applies only with any force to a period which is now long past; and it is probable, upon various considerations, that such another period will never revolve. The rhetorician's art in its glory and power has silently faded away before

the stern tendencies of the age; and if, by any peculiarity of taste or strong determination of the intellect, a rhetorician, *en grand costume*, were again to appear amongst us, it is certain that he would have no better welcome than a stare of surprise as a posture-maker or balancer, not more elevated in the general estimate, but far less amusing, than the acrobat or funambulist, or equestrian gymnast. No; the age of rhetoric like that of chivalry has passed amongst forgotten things; and the rhetorician can have no more chance for returning, than the rhapsodist of early Greece or the troubadour of romance. So multiplied are the modes of intellectual enjoyment in modern times, that the choice is absolutely distracted; and in a boundless theatre of pleasures, to be had at little or no cost of intellectual activity, it would be marvellous indeed if any considerable audience could be found for an exhibition which presupposes a state of tense exertion on the part both of auditor and performer. To hang upon one's own thoughts as an object of conscious interest, to play with them, to watch and pursue them through a maze of inversions, evolutions, and harlequin changes, implies a condition of society either like that in the monastic ages, forced to introvert its energies from mere defect of books (whence arose the scholastic metaphysics, admirable for its subtlety, but famish-

ing the mind, whilst it sharpened its edge in one exclusive direction); or, if it implies no absolute starvation of intellect, as in the case of the Roman rhetoric, which arose upon a considerable (though not very various) literature, it proclaims at least a quiescent state of the public mind, unoccupied with daily novelties, and at leisure from the agitations of eternal change.

Growing out of the same condition of society, there is another cause at work which will for ever prevent the resurrection of rhetoric, viz., the necessities of public business, its vast extent, complexity, fulness of details, and consequent vulgarity, as compared with that of the ancients. The very same cause, by the way, furnishes an answer to the question moved by Hume, in one of his essays, with regard to the declension of eloquence in our deliberative assemblies. Eloquence, or at least that which is senatorial and forensic, has languished under the same changes of society which have proved fatal to rhetoric. The political economy of the ancient republics, and their commerce, were simple and unelaborate; the system of their public services, both martial and civil, was arranged on the most naked and manageable principles; for we must not confound the perplexity in our modern explanations of these things, with a perplexity in the things themselves. The foundation of these differences was in the

differences of domestic life. Personal wants being few, both from climate and from habit, and, in the great majority of the citizens, limited almost to the pure necessities of nature; hence arose, for the mass of the population, the possibility of surrendering themselves, much more than with us, either to the one paramount business of the state, war, or to a state of Indian idleness. Rome, in particular, during the ages of her growing luxury, must be regarded as a nation supported by other nations; by largesses, in effect; that is to say, by the plunder of conquest. Living, therefore, upon foreign alms, or upon corn purchased by the product of tribute or of spoils, a nation could readily dispense with that expansive development of her internal resources, upon which modern Europe has been forced by the more equal distribution of power amongst the civilized world.

The changes, which have followed in the functions of our popular assemblies, correspond to the great revolution here described. Suppose yourself an ancient Athenian, at some customary display of Athenian oratory, what will be the topics? Peace or war, vengeance for public wrongs, or mercy to prostrate submission, national honour and national gratitude, glory and shame, and every aspect of open appeal to the primal sensibilities of man. On the other hand, enter an

English Parliament, having the most of a popular character in its constitution and practice that is anywhere to be found in the Christendom of this day, and the subject of debate will probably be a road-bill, a bill for enabling a coal-gas company to assume certain privileges against a competitor in oil-gas,* a bill for disfranchising a corrupt borough, or perhaps some technical point of form in the Exchequer Bills' bill. So much is the face of public business vulgarized by details. The same spirit of differences extends to forensic eloquence. Grecian and Roman pleadings are occupied with questions of elementary justice, large and diffusive, apprehensible even to the uninstructed, and connecting themselves at every step with powerful and tempestuous feelings. In British trials, on the contrary, the field is foreclosed against any interest of so elevating a nature, because the rights and wrongs of the case are almost inevitably absorbed to an unlearned eye by the technicalities of the law, or by the intricacy of the facts.

But this is not always the case; doubtless not; subjects for eloquence, and therefore eloquence, will sometimes arise in our senate and our courts of justice. And in one respect our British displays are more advantageously circumstanced than the ancient, being more conspicuously

* Written thirty years ago.

brought forward into effect by their contrast to the ordinary course of business.

> "Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
> Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
> Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
> Or captain jewels in the carcanet."*

But still the objection of Hume remains unimpeached, as to the fact that eloquence is a rarer growth of modern than of ancient civil polity, even in those countries which have the advantage of free institutions. Now why is this? The letter of this objection is sustained, but substantially it is disarmed, so far as its purpose was to argue any declension on the part of Christian nations, by this explanation of ours, which traces the impoverished condition of civil eloquence to the complexity of public business.

But eloquence, in one form or other, is immortal, and will never perish so long as there are human hearts moving under the agitations of hope and fear, love and passionate hatred. And, in particular to us of the modern world, as an endless source of indemnification for what we have lost in the simplicity of our social systems, we have received a new dowry of eloquence, and *that* of the highest order, in the sanctities of our religion, a field unknown to antiquity, for the pagan religions did not produce much poetry, and of oratory none at all.

* Shakspere, *Sonnet* 52.

On the other hand, that cause, which, operating upon eloquence, has but extinguished it under a single direction, to rhetoric has been unconditionally fatal. Eloquence is not banished from the public business of this country as useless, but as difficult, and as not spontaneously arising from topics such as generally furnish the staple of debate. But rhetoric, if attempted on a formal scale, would be summarily exploded as pure foppery and trifling with time. Falstaff, on the field of battle, presenting his bottle of sack for a pistol, or Polonius with his quibbles, could not appear a more unseasonable *plaisanteur* than a rhetorican alighting from the clouds upon a public assembly in Great Britain met for the despatch of business.

Under these malign aspects of the modern structure of society, a structure to which the whole world will be moulded as it becomes civilized, there can be no room for any revival of rhetoric in public speaking; and from the same and other causes, acting upon the standard of public taste, quite as little room in written composition. In spite, however, of the tendencies to this consummation, which have been long ripening, it is a fact, that, next after Rome, England is the country in which rhetoric prospered most, at a time when science was unborn as a popular interest, and the commercial activi-

ties of after-times were yet sleeping in their rudiments. This was in the period from the latter end of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century; and, though the English rhetoric was less rigorously true to its own ideal than the Roman, and often modulated into a higher key of impassioned eloquence, yet unquestionably in some of its qualities it remains a monument of the very finest rhetorical powers.

Omitting Sir Philip Sidney, and omitting his friend, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (in whose prose there are some bursts of pathetic eloquence, as there is of rhetoric in his verse, though too often harsh and cloudy), the first very eminent rhetorician in the English literature is Donne. Dr. Johnson inconsiderately classes him in company with Cowley, etc., under the title of *Metaphysical* Poets: metaphysical they were not; *Rhetorical* would have been a more accurate designation. In saying *that*, however, we must remind our readers that we revert to the original use of the word *Rhetoric*, as laying the principal stress upon the management of the thoughts, and only a secondary one upon the ornaments of style. Few writers have shown a more extraordinary compass of powers than Donne; for he combined what no other man has ever done—the last sublimation of dialectical subtlety and address with the most impassioned majesty. Massy diamonds

compose the very substance of his poem on the Metempsychosis, thoughts and descriptions which have the fervent and gloomy sublimity of Ezekiel or Æschylus, whilst a diamond dust of rhetorical brilliances is strewed over the whole of his occasional verses and his prose. No criticism was ever more unhappy than that of Dr. Johnson's, which denounces all this artificial display as so much perversion of taste. There cannot be a falser thought than this; for, upon that principle, a whole class of compositions might be vicious by conforming to its own ideal. The artifice and machinery of rhetoric furnishes, in its degree, as legitimate a basis for intellectual pleasure as any other; that the pleasure is of an inferior order, can no more attaint the idea or model of the composition, than it can impeach the excellence of an epigram that it is not a tragedy. Every species of composition is to be tried by its own laws; and if Dr. Johnson had urged explicitly (what was evidently moving in his thoughts), that a metrical structure, by holding forth the promise of poetry, defrauds the mind of its just expectations, he would have said what is notoriously false. Metre is open to any form of composition, provided it will aid the expression of the thoughts; and the only sound objection to it is, that it has *not* done so. Weak criticism, indeed, is that which condemns a copy of verses under the ideal

of poetry, when the mere substitution of another name and classification suffices to evade the sentence, and to reinstate the composition in its rights as rhetoric. It may be very true that the age of Donne gave too much encouragement to his particular vein of composition; that, however, argues no depravity of taste, but a taste erring only in being too limited and exclusive.

The next writers of distinction, who came forward as rhetoricians, were Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Milton in many of his prose works. They labour under opposite defects: Burton is too quaint, fantastic, and disjointed. Milton too slow, solemn, and continuous. In the one we see the flutter of a parachute; in the other the stately and voluminous gyrations of an ascending balloon. Agile movement, and a certain degree of fanciful-ness, are indispensable to rhetoric. But Burton is not so much fanciful as capricious; his motion is not the motion of freedom, but of lawlessness; he does not dance, but caper. Milton, on the other hand, *polonaises* with a grand Castilian air, in paces too sequacious and processional; even in his passages of merriment, and when stung into a quicker motion by personal disdain for an unworthy antagonist, his thoughts and his imagery still appear to move to the music of the organ.

In some measure, it is a consequence of these peculiarities, and so far it is the more a duty to

allow for them, that the rhetoric of Milton though wanting in animation is unusually superb in its colouring; its very monotony is derived from the sublime unity of the presiding impulse; and hence, it sometimes ascends into eloquence of the highest kind, and sometimes even into the raptures of lyric poetry. The main thing, indeed, wanting to Milton, was to have fallen upon happier subjects: for, with the exception of the "Areopagitica," there is not one of his prose works upon a theme of universal interest, or perhaps fitted to be the ground-work of a rhetorical display.

But, as it has happened to Milton sometimes to give us poetry for rhetoric, in one instance he has unfortunately given us rhetoric for poetry: this occurs in the *Paradise Lost*, where the debates of the fallen angels are carried on by a degrading process of gladiatorical rhetoric. Nay, even the councils of God, though not debated to and fro, are, however, expounded rhetorically. This is astonishing; for no one was better aware than Milton * of the distinction between the *discursive* and *intuitive* acts of the mind, as apprehended by the old metaphysicians, and the incompatibility of the former with any but a limitary intellect. This indeed was familiar to all the writers of his day: but, as Mr. Gifford has shown, by a most idle

* See the Fifth Book of the *Paradise Lost*, and passages in his prose writings.

note upon a passage in Massinger, that it is a distinction that has now perished (except indeed in Germany), we shall recall it to the reader's attention. An *intuition* is any knowledge whatsoever, sensuous or intellectual, which is apprehended *immediately:* a notion, on the other hand, or product of the discursive faculty, is any knowledge whatsoever which is apprehended *mediately.* All reasoning is carried on discursively; that is, *discurrendo,*—by running about to the right and the left, laying the separate notices together, and thence mediately deriving some third apprehension. Now this process, however grand a characteristic of the human species as distinguished from the brute, is degrading to any supra-human intelligence, divine or angelic, by arguing limitation. God must not proceed by steps and the fragmentary knowledge of accretion; in which case, at starting, he has all the intermediate notices as so many bars between himself and the conclusion, and, even at the penultimate or antepenultimate act, he is still short of the truth. God must *see;* he must *intuit,* so to speak; and all truth must reach him simultaneously, first and last, without succession of time or partition of acts: just as light, before that theory had been refuted by the Satellites of Jupiter, was held not to be propagated in time, but to be here and there at one and the same indivisible instant. Paley, from mere rudeness of metaphysical skill,

has talked of the *judgment* and the *judiciousness* of God: but this is profaneness, and a language unworthily applied even to an angelic being. To judge, that is to subsume one proposition under another,—to be judicious, that is, to collate the means with the end, are acts impossible in the Divine nature, and not to be ascribed, even under the license of a figure, to any being which transcends the limitations of humanity. Many other instances there are, in which Milton is taxed with having too grossly sensualized his supernatural agents; some of which, however, the necessities of the action may excuse; and at the worst they are readily submitted to as having an intelligible purpose—that of bringing so mysterious a thing as a spiritual nature or agency within the limits of the representable. But the intellectual degradation fixed on his spiritual beings by the rhetorical debates is purely gratuitous, neither resulting from the course of the action nor at all promoting it. Making allowances, however, for the original error in the conception, it must be granted that the execution is in the best style: the mere logic of the debate, indeed, is not better managed than it would have been by the House of Commons. But the colours of style are grave and suitable to afflicted angels. In the *Paradise Regained*, this is still more conspicuously true: the oratory there, on the part of Satan in the Wilderness, is no

longer of a rhetorical cast, but in the grandest style of impassioned eloquence that can be imagined as the fit expression for the movements of an angelic despair; and in particular the speech, on being first challenged by our Saviour, beginning,

"'Tis true I *am* that spirit unfortunate,"

is not excelled in sublimity by any passage in the poem.

Milton, however, was not destined to gather the *spolia opima* of English rhetoric: two contemporaries of his own, and whose literary course pretty nearly coincided with his own in point of time, surmounted all competition, and in that amphitheatre became the Protagonistæ. These were Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne; who, if not absolutely the foremost in the accomplishments of art, were undoubtedly the richest, the most dazzling, and, with reference to their matter, the most captivating of all rhetoricians. In them first, and perhaps (if we except occasional passages in the German John Paul Richter) in them only, are the two opposite forces of eloquent passion and rhetorical fancy brought into an exquisite equilibrium, approaching, receding — attracting, repelling—blending, separating—chasing and chased, as in a fugue, and again lost in a delightful interfusion, so as to create a middle species of composition, more various and stimula-

ting to the understanding than pure eloquence, more gratifying to the affections than naked rhetoric. Under this one circumstance of coincidence, in other respects their minds were of the most opposite temperament: Sir Thomas Browne, deep, tranquil, and majestic as Milton, silently premeditating and "disclosing his golden couplets," as under some genial instinct of incubation: Jeremy Taylor, restless, fervid, aspiring, scattering abroad a prodigality of life, not unfolding, but creating, with the energy and the "myriad-mindedness" of Shakspere. Where, but in Sir T. B., shall one hope to find music so Miltonic, an intonation of such solemn chords as are struck in the following opening bar of a passage in the Urn-burial—"Now, since these bones have rested quietly in the grave, under the drums and tramplings of three conquests," etc. What a melodious ascent as of a prelude to some impassioned requiem breathing from the pomps of earth, and from the sanctities of the grave! What a *fluctus decumanus* of rhetoric! Time expounded, not by generations or centuries, but by the vast periods of conquests and dynasties; by cycles of Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Antiochi and Arsacides! And these vast successions of time distinguished and figured by the uproars which revolve at their inaugurations; by the drums and tramplings rolling overhead upon the chambers of forgotten dead—the trepi-

dations of time and mortality vexing, at secular intervals, the everlasting sabbaths of the grave! Show us, O pedant, such another strain from the oratory of Greece or Rome! For it is not an Οὐ μα τους ἐν Μαραθωνι τεθνηκοτας, or any such bravura, that will make a fit antiphony to this sublime rapture. We will not, however, attempt a descant upon the merits of Sir T. Browne, after the admirable one by Coleridge: and as to Jeremy Taylor, we would as readily undertake to put a belt about the ocean as to characterize him adequately within the space at our command. It will please the reader better that he should characterize himself, however imperfectly, by a few specimens selected from some of his rarest works; a method which will, at the same time, have the collateral advantage of illustrating an important truth in reference to this florid or Corinthian order of rhetoric, which we shall have occasion to notice a little further on:—

"It was observed by a Spanish confessor, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made upon their deathbeds, were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition than all which he had observed them to make in many years before. For, so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud, and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and uninterrupted but with few

knots, and are strong and beauteous, with great distances and intervals; but, when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body. So are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace. At first, when he springs up from his impurity by the waters of baptism and repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety; and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the ends of their life; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaks are frequent, and they seek excuses, and labour for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less, till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses, light and useless as the tufted feathers upon the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful."

"If we consider the price that the Son of God paid for the redemption of a soul, we shall better estimate of it, than from the weak discourses of our imperfect and unlearned philosophy. Not the spoil of rich provinces—not the estimate of kingdoms—not the price of Cleopatra's draught—not anything that was corruptible or perishing; for

that which could not one minute retard the term of its own natural dissolution; could not be a price for the redemption of one perishing soul. When God *made* a soul, it was only *faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram;* he spake the word, and it was done. But when man had lost his soul, which the Spirit of God had breathed unto him, it was not so soon *recovered.* It is like the resurrection, which hath troubled the faith of many, who are more apt to believe that God made a man from nothing, than that he can return a man from dust and corruption. But for this resurrection of the soul, for the re-implacing of the Divine image, for the re-entitling it to the kingdoms of grace and glory, God did a greater work than the creation; He was fain to contract Divinity to a span; to send a person to die for us, who of himself could not die, and was constrained to use rare and mysterious arts to make him capable of dying: He prepared a person instrumental to his purpose, by sending his Son from his own bosom —a person both God and man, an enigma to all nations and to all sciences; one that ruled over all the angels, that walked on the pavements of heaven, whose feet were clothed with stars; whose understanding is larger than that infinite space which we imagine in the uncircumscribed distance beyond the first orb of heaven; a person to whom felicity was as essential as life to God. This was

the only person that was designed in the eternal decrees, to pay the price of a soul; less than this person could not do it. Nothing less than an infinite excellence could satisfy for a soul lost to infinite ages; who was to bear the load of an infinite anger from the provocation of an eternal God. And yet, if it be possible that Infinite can receive degrees, this is but one-half of the abyss, and I think the lesser."

"It was a strange variety of natural efficacies, that manna should corrupt in twenty-four hours, if gathered upon Wednesday or Thursday, and that it should last till forty-eight hours, if gathered upon the even of the Sabbath; and that it should last many hundreds of years when placed in the sanctuary by the ministry of the high priest. But so it was in the Jews' religion; and manna pleased every palate, and it filled all appetites; and the same measure was a different proportion, it was much, and it was little; as if nature, that it might serve religion, had been taught some measures of infinity, which is everywhere and nowhere, filling all things, and circumscribed with nothing, measured by one omer, and doing the work of two; like the crowns of kings, fitting the brows of Nimrod and the most mighty warrior, and yet not too large for the temples of an infant prince."

"His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel: for all the world, in the abyss of the Divine mercies, is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is immeasurable: and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers: and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend, this infinity."

These passages are not cited with so vain a purpose as that of furnishing a sea-line for measuring the "soundless deeps" of Jeremy Taylor, but to illustrate that one remarkable characteristic of his style, which we have already noticed, viz., the everlasting strife and fluctuation between his rhetoric and his eloquence, which maintain their alternations with a force and inevitable recurrence, like the systole and diastole, the contraction and expansion, of some living organ. For this characteristic, he was indebted in mixed proportions to his own peculiar style of understanding, and the nature of his subject. Where the understanding is not active and teeming, but possessed and filled by a few vast ideas (which was the case of Milton), there the funds of a

varied rhetoric are wanting. On the other hand, where the understanding is all alive with the subtility of distinctions, and nourished (as Jeremy Taylor's was) by casuistical divinity, the variety and opulence of the rhetoric is apt to be oppressive. But this tendency, in the case of Taylor, was happily checked and balanced by the commanding passion, intensity, and solemnity of his exalted theme, which gave a final unity to the tumultuous motions of his intellect. The only very obvious defects of Taylor were in the mechanical part of his art, in the mere *technique;* he writes like one who never revises, nor tries the effect upon his ear of his periods as musical wholes; and in the syntax and connexion of the parts seems to have been habitually careless of slight blemishes.

Jeremy Taylor* died in a few years after the Restoration. Sir Thomas Browne, though at

* In retracing the history of English rhetoric, it may strike the reader, that we have made some capital omissions. But in these he will find we have been governed by sufficient reasons. Shakspere is no doubt a rhetorician, *majorum gentium;* but he is so much more, that scarcely an instance is to be found of his rhetoric which does not pass by fits into a higher element of eloquence or poetry. The first and the last acts, for instance, of the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, which, in point of composition, is perhaps the most superb work in the language, and beyond all doubt from the loom of Shakspere, would have been the most gorgeous rhetoric, had they not happened to be something far better. The supplications of the widowed Queens to Theseus, the invocations of their

that time nearly thirty years removed from the first surreptitious edition of his *Religio Medici*, lingered a little longer. But, when both were gone, it may be truly affirmed that the great

tutelar divinities, by Palamon and Arcite, the death of Arcite, etc., are finished in a more elaborate style of excellence than any other almost of Shakspere's most felicitous scenes. In their first intention, they were perhaps merely rhetorical; but the furnace of composition has transmuted their substance. Indeed, specimens of mere rhetoric would be better sought in some of the other great dramatists, who are under a less fatal necessity of turning everything they touch into the pure gold of poetry. Two other writers, with great original capacities for rhetoric, we have omitted in our list from separate considerations: we mean Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Bacon. The first will hardly have been missed by the general reader; for his finest passages are dispersed through the body of his bulky history, and are touched with a sadness too pathetic, and of too personal a growth, to fulfil the conditions of a gay rhetoric as an art rejoicing in its own energies. With regard to Lord Bacon, the case is different. He had great advantages for rhetoric, being figurative and sensuous (as great thinkers must always be), and having no feelings too profound, or of a nature to disturb the balance of a pleasurable activity; but yet, if we except a few letters, and parts of a few speeches, he never comes forward as a rhetorician. The reason is, that being always in quest of absolute truth, he contemplates all subjects,—not through the rhetorical fancy, which is most excited by mere seeming resemblances, and such as can only sustain themselves under a single phasis, but through the philosophic fancy, or that which rests upon real analogies. Another unfavourable circumstance, arising in fact out of the plethoric fulness of Lord B.'s mind, is the short-hand style of his composition, in which the connexions are seldom fully developed. It was the lively *mot* of a great modern poet, speaking of Lord B.'s Essay's, "that they are not plants, but seeds; not oaks, but acorns."

oracles of rhetoric were finally silenced. South and Barrow, indeed, were brilliant dialecticians in different styles; but after Tillotson with his meagre intellect, his low key of feeling, and the smug and scanty draperies of his style, had announced a new era, English divinity ceased to be the racy vineyard that it had been in ages of ferment and struggle. Like the soil of Sicily (*vide Sir H. Davy's Agricultural Chemistry*), it was exhausted for ever by the tilth and rank fertility of its golden youth.

Since then great passions and high thinking have either disappeared from literature altogether, or thrown themselves into poetic forms which, with the privilege of a masquerade, are allowed to assume the spirit of past ages, and to speak in a key unknown to the general literature. At all events, no pulpit oratory of a rhetorical cast, for upwards of a century, has been able to support itself when stripped of the aids of voice and action. Robert Hall and Edward Irving, when printed, exhibit only the spasms of weakness. Nor do we remember one memorable burst of rhetoric in the pulpit eloquence of the last one hundred and fifty years, with the exception of a fine oath ejaculated by a dissenting minister of Cambridge, who, when appealing for the confirmation of his words to the grandeur of man's nature, swore,— By this and by the other, and at length, "By the

Iliad, by the Odyssey"—as the climax, in a long bead-roll of *speciosa miracula*, which he had apostrophized as monuments of human power. As to Foster, he has been prevented from preaching by a complaint affecting the throat; but, judging from the quality of his celebrated Essays, he could never have figured as a truly splendid rhetorician; for the imagery and ornamental parts of his Essays have evidently not grown up in the loom, and concurrently with the texture of the thoughts, but have been separately added afterwards, as so much embroidery or fringe.

Politics, meantime, however inferior in any shape to religion, as an ally of real eloquence, might yet, either when barbed by an interest of intense personality, or on the very opposite footing of an interest *not* personal but comprehensively national, have irritated the growth of rhetoric such as the spirit of the times allowed. In one conspicuous instance, it did so; but generally it had little effect, as a cursory glance over the two last centuries will show.

In the reign of James I. the House of Commons first became the theatre of struggles truly national. The relations of the people and the crown were then brought to issue, and, under shifting names, continued *sub judice* from that time to 1688; and from that time, in fact, a corresponding interest was directed to the proceedings of Parliament.

But it was not until 1642 that any free communication was made of what passed in debate. During the whole of the Civil War, the speeches of the leading members upon all great questions were freely published in occasional pamphlets. Naturally they were very much compressed; but enough survives to show that from the agitations of the times and the religious gravity of the House, no rhetoric was sought or would have been tolerated. In the reign of Charles II., judging from such records as we have of the most critical debates (that preserved by Locke, for instance, through the assistance of his patron Lord Shaftesbury), the general tone and standard of Parliamentary eloquence had taken pretty nearly its present form and level. The religious gravity had then given way; and the pedantic tone, stiffness, and formality of punctual divisions, had been abandoned for the freedom of polite conversation. It was not, however, until the reign of Queen Anne that the qualities and style of parliamentary eloquence were submitted to public judgment; this was on occasion of the trial of Dr. Sacheverel, which was managed by members of the House of Commons. The Whigs, however, of that era had no distinguished speakers. On the Tory side, St. John (Lord Bolingbroke) was the most accomplished person in the House. His style may be easily collected from his writings,

which have all the air of having been dictated without premeditation; and the effect of so much showy and fluent declamation, combined with the graces of his manner and person, may be inferred from the deep impression which they seem to have left upon Lord Chesterfield, himself so accomplished a judge, and so familiar with the highest efforts of the next age in Pulteney and Lord Chatham. With two exceptions, indeed, to be noticed presently, Lord Bolingbroke came the nearest of all parliamentary orators who have been particularly recorded, to the ideal of a fine rhetorician. It was no disadvantage to him that he was shallow, being so luminous and transparent; and the splendour of his periodic diction, with his fine delivery, compensated his defect in imagery. Sir Robert Walpole was another Lord Londonderry; like him, an excellent statesman, and a first-rate leader of the House of Commons, but in other respects a plain unpretending man; and, like Lord Londonderry, he had the reputation of a blockhead with all eminent blockheads, and of a man of talents with those who were themselves truly such. "When I was very young," says Burke, "a general fashion told me I was to admire some of the writings against that minister; a little more maturity taught me as much to despise them." Lord Mansfield, "the fluent Murray," was, or would have been, but for the

counteraction of law, another Bolingbroke. "How sweet an Ovid was in Murray lost!" says Pope; and, if the comparison were suggested with any thoughtful propriety, it ascribes to Lord Mansfield the talents of a first-rate rhetorician. Lord Chatham had no rhetoric at all, any more than Charles Fox of the next generation: both were too fervent, too Demosthenic, and threw themselves too ardently upon the graces of nature. Mr. Pitt came nearer to the idea of a rhetorician, in so far as he seemed to have more artifice; but this was only in the sonorous rotundity of his periods, which were cast in a monotonous mould, for in other respects he would have been keenly alive to the ridicule of rhetoric in a First Lord of the Treasury.

All these persons, whatever might be their other differences, agreed in this, that they were no jugglers, but really *were* that which they appeared to be, and never struggled for distinctions which did not naturally belong to them. But next upon the roll comes forward an absolute *charlatan;* a *charlatan* the most accomplished that can ever have figured upon so intellectual a stage. This was Sheridan, a mocking-bird through the entire scale, from the highest to the lowest note of the gamut; in fact, to borrow a coarse word, the mere impersonation of humbug. Even as a wit, he has been long known to be a wholesale

plagiarist; and the exposures of his kind biographer, Mr. Moore, exhibit him in that line as the most hide-bound and sterile of performers, lying perdu through a whole evening for a natural opportunity, or by miserable stratagem creating an artificial one, for exploding some poor starveling jest; and in fact sacrificing to this petty ambition, in a degree never before heard of, the ease and dignity of his life. But it is, in the character of a rhetorical orator, that he, and his friends on his behalf, have put forward the hollowest pretensions. In the course of the Hastings trial, upon the concerns of paralytic *Begums*, and mouldering queens—hags that if ever actually existing, were no more to us and our British sympathies, than we to Hecuba—did Mr. Sheridan make his capital exhibition. The real value of his speech was never at any time misappreciated by the judicious; for his attempts at the grand, the pathetic, and the sentimental, had been continually in the same tone of falsetto and horrible fustian. Burke, however, who was the most double-minded person in the world, cloaked his contempt in hyperbolical flattery; and all the unhappy people who have since written lives of Burke adopt the whole for gospel truth. Exactly in the same vein of tumid inanity, is the speech which Mr. Sheridan puts into the mouth of Rolla the Peruvian. This the

reader may chance to have heard upon the stage; or, in default of that good luck, we present him with the following fragrant twaddle from one of the Begummiads, which has been enshrined in the praises (si quid sua carmina possunt) of many worthy critics; the subject is *Filial Piety.* "Filial Piety," Mr. Sheridan said, "it was impossible by words to describe, but description by words was unnecessary. It was that duty which they all felt and understood, and which required not the powers of language to explain. It was in truth more properly to be called a *principle* than a duty. It required not the aid of memory; it needed not the exercise of the understanding; it awaited not the slow deliberations of reason; it flowed spontaneously from the fountain of our feelings; it was involuntary in our natures; it was a quality of our being, innate and coeval with life, which, though afterwards cherished as a passion, was independent of our mental powers; it was earlier than all intelligence in our souls; it displayed itself in the earliest impulses of the heart, and was an emotion of fondness that returned in smiles of gratitude the affectionate solicitudes, the tender anxieties, the endearing attentions experienced before memory began, but which were not less dear for not being remembered. It was the sacrament of nature in our hearts, by which the union of the parent and child was

sealed and rendered perfect in the community of love; and which, strengthening and ripening with life, acquired vigour from the understanding, and was most lively and active when most wanted." Now, we put it to any candid reader whether the above Birmingham ware might not be vastly improved by one slight alteration, viz., omitting the two first words, and reading it as a conundrum. Considered as rhetoric, it is evidently fitted "to make a horse sick;" but, as a conundrum in the *Lady's Magazine*, we contend that it would have great success.

How it aggravates the disgust with which these paste-diamonds are now viewed, to remember that they were paraded in the presence of Edmund Burke; nay—*credite posteri!*—in jealous rivalry of his genuine and priceless jewels. Irresistibly, one is reminded of the dancing efforts of Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs, against the native grace of the Vicar of Wakefield's family:—"The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success. *They swam, sprawled, languished and frisked;* but all would not do. The gazers, indeed, owned that it was fine; but neighbour Flamborough observed, that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo." Of Goldsmith it was said, in his epitaph,—*Nil tetigit quod non ornavit:* of the Drury Lane rhetorician it might be said

with equal truth,—*Nil tetigit quod non fuco adulteravit.* But avaunt, Birmingham! let us speak of a great man.

All hail to Edmund Burke, the supreme writer of his century, the man of the largest and finest understanding? Upon that word *understanding*, we lay a stress: for oh! ye immortal donkeys, who have written "about him and about him," with what an obstinate stupidity have ye brayed away for one third of a century about that which ye are pleased to call his "fancy." Fancy in your throats, ye miserable twaddlers! As if Edmund Burke were the man to play with his fancy, for the purpose of separable ornament. He was a man of fancy in no other sense than as Lord Bacon was so, and Jeremy Taylor, and as all large and discursive thinkers are and must be: that is to say, the fancy which he had in common with all mankind, and very probably in no eminent degree, in him was urged into unusual activity under the necessities of his capacious understanding. His great and peculiar distinction was, that he viewed all objects of the understanding under more relations than other men, and under more complex relations. According to the multiplicity of these relations, a man is said to have a *large* understanding; according to their subtilty, a *fine* one; and in an angelic understanding, all things would appear to be related to all. Now,

to apprehend and detect more relations, or to pursue them steadily, is a process absolutely impossible without the intervention of physical analogies. To say, therefore, that a man is a great thinker, or a fine thinker, is but another expression for saying that he has a *schematizing* (or to use a plainer but less accurate expression, a figurative) understanding. In that sense, and for that purpose, Burke is figurative: but understood, as he *has* been understood by the long-eared race of his critics, not as thinking in and by his figures, but as deliberately laying them on by way of enamel or after-ornament,—not as *incarnating*, but simply as *dressing* his thoughts in imagery,—so understood, he is not the Burke of reality, but a poor fictitious Burke, modelled after the poverty of conception which belongs to his critics.

It is true, however, that in some rare cases Burke *did* indulge himself in a pure rhetorician's use of fancy; consciously and profusely lavishing his ornaments for mere purposes of effect. Such a case occurs, for instance, in that admirable picture of the degradation of Europe, where he represents the different crowned heads as bidding against each other at Basle for the favour and countenance of Regicide. Others of the same kind there are in his ever memorable letter on the Duke of Bedford's attack upon him in the

House of Lords; and one of these we shall here cite, disregarding its greater chance of being already familiar to the reader, upon two considerations; first, that it has all the appearance of being finished with the most studied regard to effect; and secondly, for an interesting anecdote connected with it which we have never seen in print, but for which we have better authority than could be produced perhaps for most of those which are. The anecdote is, that Burke conversing with Dr. Lawrence and another gentleman on the *literary* value of his own writings, declared that the particular passage in the entire range of his works which had cost him the most labour, and upon which, as tried by a certain canon of his own, his labour seemed to himself to have been the most successful, was the following:—

After an introductory paragraph which may be thus abridged,—"The Crown has considered *me* after long service. The Crown has paid the Duke of Bedford by advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform hereafter. He is secure, and long may he be secure in his advance, whether he performs any services or not. His grants are engrafted on the public law of Europe, covered with the awful hoar of innumerable ages. They are guarded by the sacred rule of prescription. The learned professors of the *rights of man*, however, regard

prescription not as a title to bar all other claim, but as a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than an aggravated injustice." Then follows the passage in question:—

"Such are *their* ideas; such *their* religion; and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our Church and State, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple (*Templum in modum arcis**), shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion; as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the State, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land, so long the mounds and dykes of the low fat Bedford level† will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France. As long as our sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects the lords and commons of this realm, the triple cord which no man can break; the solemn sworn constitutional frank-pledge of

* Tacitus of the Temple of Jerusalem.

† *Bedford level*, a rich tract of land so called in Bedfordshire.

this nation; the firm guarantees of each other's being and each other's rights; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity,—as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe, and we are all safe together; the high from the blights of envy and the spoliation of rapacity; the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it: and so it will be,

> "Dum domus Æneæ Capitoli immobile saxum,
> Accolet; imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.'"

This was the sounding passage which Burke alleged as the *chef-d'œuvre* of his rhetoric; and the argument upon which he justified his choice is specious if not convincing. He laid it down as a maxim of composition, that every passage in a rhetorical performance which was brought forward prominently, and relied upon as a *key* (to use the language of war) in sustaining the main position of the writer, ought to involve a thought, an image, and a sentiment; and such a synthesis he found in the passage which we have quoted. This criticism, over and above the pleasure which it always gives to hear a great man's opinion of himself, is valuable as showing that Burke, because negligent of trivial inaccuracies, was not at all the less anxious about the larger proprieties

and decorums [for this passage, confessedly so laboured, has several instances of slovenliness in trifles]; and that in the midst of his apparent hurry he carried out a jealous vigilance upon what he wrote, and the eye of a person practised in artificial effects.

An ally of Burke's upon East Indian politics, ought to have a few words of notice, not so much for any power that he actually had as a rhetorician, but because he is sometimes reputed such. This was Sir Philip Francis, who, under his early disguise of Junius, had such a success as no writer of libels ever will have again. It is our private opinion that this success rested upon a great delusion which has never been exposed. The general belief is, that Junius was read for his elegance; we believe no such thing. The pen of an angel would not, upon such a theme as personal politics, have upheld the interest attached to Junius, had there been no other cause in co-operation. Language, after all, is a limited instrument; and it must be remembered that Junius, by the extreme narrowness of his range, which went entirely upon matters of fact and personal interests, still further limited the compass of that limited instrument. For it is only in the expression and management of general ideas, that any room arises for conspicuous elegance. The real truth is this: the interest in Junius travelled

downwards; he was read in the lower ranks, because in London it speedily became known that he was read with peculiar interest in the highest. This was already a marvel; for newspaper patriots, under the signatures of Publicola, Brutus, and so forth, had become a jest and a by-word to the real practical statesman; and any man at leisure to write for so disinterested a purpose as "his country's good," was presumed of course to write in a garret. But here for the first time a pretended patriot, a Junius Brutus, was read even by statesmen, and read with agitation. Is any man simple enough to believe that such a contagion could extend to cabinet ministers and official persons overladen with public business, on so feeble an excitement as a little reputation in the art of constructing sentences with elegance; an elegance which, after all, excluded eloquence and every other *positive* quality of excellence? That this can have been believed, shows the readiness with which men swallow marvels. The real secret was this: Junius was read with the profoundest interest by members of the cabinet, who would not have paid half-a-crown for all the wit and elegance of this world, simply because it was most evident that some traitor was amongst them; and that either directly by one of themselves, or through some abuse of his confidence by a servant, the secrets of office were betrayed. The

circumstances of this breach of trust are now fully known; and it is readily understood why letters, which were the channel for those perfidies, should interest the ministry of that day in the deepest degree. The existence of such an interest, but not its cause, had immediately become known; it descended, as might be expected, amongst all classes; once excited, it seemed to be justified by the real merits of the letters; which merit again, illustrated by its effects, appeared a thousand times greater than it was; and, finally, this interest was heightened and sustained by the mystery which invested the author. How much that mystery availed in keeping alive the public interest in Junius, is clear from this fact, that since the detection of Junius as Sir Philip Francis, the Letters have suddenly declined in popularity, and are no longer the saleable article which once they were.

In fact, upon any other principle, the continued triumph of Junius, and his establishment as a classical author, is a standing enigma. One talent, undoubtedly, he had in a rare perfection—the talent of sarcasm. He stung like a scorpion. But, besides that such a talent has a narrow application, an interest of personality cannot be other than fugitive, take what direction it may; and malignity cannot embalm itself in materials that are themselves perishable. Such were the

materials of Junius. His vaunted elegance was, in a great measure, the gift of his subject; general terseness, short sentences, and a careful avoiding of all awkward construction—these were his advantages. And from these he would have been dislodged by a higher subject, or one that would have forced him out into a wider compass of thought. Rhetorician he was none, though he has often been treated as such; for, without sentiment, without imagery, without generalization, how should it be possible for rhetoric to subsist? It is an absolute fact, that Junius has not one principle, aphorism, or remark of a general nature in his whole armory; not in a solitary instance did his barren understanding ascend to an abstraction or general idea, but lingered for ever in the dust and rubbish of individuality, amongst the tangible realities of things and persons. Hence, the peculiar absurdity of that hypothesis which discovered Junius in the person of Burke. The opposition was here too pointedly ludicrous between Burke, who exalted the merest personal themes into the dignity of philosophic speculations, and Junius, in whose hands the very loftiest dwindled into questions of person and party.

Last of the family of rhetoricians, and in a form of rhetoric as florid as the age could bear, came Mr. Canning. "Sufficit," says a Roman author, "in una civitate esse unum rhetorem."

But, if more were in his age unnecessary, in ours they would have been intolerable. Three or four Mr. Cannings would have been found a nuisance; indeed, the very admiration which crowned his great displays, manifested of itself the unsuitableness of his style to the atmosphere of public affairs; for it was of that kind which is offered to a young lady rising from a brilliant performance on the pianoforte. Something, undoubtedly, there was of too juvenile an air, too gaudy a flutter of plumage, in Mr. Canning's more solemn exhibitions; but much indulgence was reasonably extended to a man who, in his class, was so complete. He was formed for winning a favourable attention by every species of popular fascination; to the eye he recommended himself almost as much as the Bolingbroke of a century before; his voice, and his management of it, were no less pleasing; and upon him, as upon St. John, the air of a gentleman sat with a native grace. Scholarship and literature, as far as they belong to the accomplishments of a gentleman, he too brought forward in the most graceful manner; and, above all, there was an impression of honour, generosity, and candour, stamped upon his manner, agreeable rather to his original character, than to the wrench which it had received from an ambition resting too much on mere personal merits. What a pity that this "gay creature of

the elements" had not taken his place contentedly, where nature had assigned it, as one of the ornamental performers of the time! His station was with the lilies of the field, which toil not, neither do they spin. He should have thrown himself upon the admiring sympathies of the world as the most dazzling of rhetorical artists, rather than have challenged their angry passions in a vulgar scuffle for power. In that case he would have been alive at this hour; he would have had a perpetuity of that admiration which to him was as the breath of his nostrils; and would not, by forcing the character of rhetorician into an incongruous alliance with that of trading politician, have run the risk of making both ridiculous.

In thus running over the modern history of rhetoric, we have confined ourselves to the literature of England: the rhetoric of the Continent would demand a separate notice, and chiefly on account of the French pulpit orators. For, laying *them* aside, we are not aware of any distinct body of rhetoric—properly so called—in modern literature. Four continental languages may be said to have a literature regularly mounted in all departments, viz., the French, Italian, Spanish, and German; but each of these has stood under separate disadvantages for the cultivation of an ornamented rhetoric. In France, whatever rhetoric they have (for Montaigne, though lively, is

too gossiping for a rhetorician), arose in the age of Louis XIV.; since which time, the very same development of science and public business operated there as in England to stifle the rhetorical impulses, and all those analogous tendencies in arts and in manners which support it. Generally it may be assumed, that rhetoric will not survive the age of the ceremonious in manners and the gorgeous in costume. An unconscious sympathy binds together the various forms of the elaborate and the fanciful, under every manifestation. Hence it is that the national convulsions by which modern France has been shaken, produced orators; Mirabeau, Isnard, the Abbé Maury, but no rhetoricians. Florian, Chateaubriand, and others, who have written the most florid prose that the modern taste can bear, are elegant sentimentalists, sometimes maudlin and semi-poetic, sometimes even eloquent, but never rhetorical. There is no eddying about their own thoughts; no motion of fancy self-sustained from its own activities; no flux and reflux of thought, half meditative, half capricious; but strains of feeling, genuine or not, supported at every step from the excitement of independent external objects.

With respect to the German literature, the case is very peculiar. A chapter upon German rhetoric would be in the same ludicrous predicament as Van Troil's chapter on the snakes of Iceland,

which delivers its business in one summary sentence, announcing that snakes in Iceland—there are none. Rhetoric, in fact, or any form of ornamented prose, could not possibly arise in a literature, in which prose itself had no proper existence till within these seventy years. Lessing was the first German who wrote prose with elegance; and even at this day, a decent prose style is the rarest of accomplishments in Germany. We doubt, indeed, whether any German has written prose with grace, unless he had lived abroad (like Jacobi, who composed indifferently in French and German), or had at least cultivated a very long acquaintance with English and French models. Frederick Schlegel was led by his comprehensive knowledge of other literatures to observe this singular defect in that of his own country. Even he, however, must have fixed his standard very low, when he could praise, as elsewhere he does, the style of Kant. Certainly in any literature where good models of prose existed, Kant would be deemed a monster of vicious diction, so far as regards the construction of his sentences. He does not, it is true, write in the hybrid dialect, which prevailed up to the time of our George the First, when every other word was Latin with a German inflexion; but he has in perfection that obtuseness which renders a German taste insensible to all beauty in the balancing

and structure of periods, and to the art by which a succession of periods modify each other. Every German regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach but for the waggon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore he next proceeds to *pack* it, which is effected partly by unwieldly tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetic involutions. All qualifications, limitations, exceptions, illustrations, are stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition. That all this equipage of accessaries is not so arranged as to assist its own orderly development, no more occurs to a German as any fault, than that in a package of shawls or of carpets the colours and patterns are not fully displayed. To him it is sufficient that they are *there*. And Mr. Kant, when he has succeeded in packing up a sentence which covers three close-printed octavo pages, stops to draw his breath with the air of one who looks back upon some brilliant and meritorious performance. Under these disadvantages it may be presumed that German rhetoric is a nonentity; but these disadvantages would not have arisen had there been a German bar or a German senate with any public existence. In the absence of all forensic and senatorial eloquence, no standard of good prose style—nay,

which is more important, no example of ambition directed to such an object—has been at any time held up to the public mind in Germany; and the pulpit style has been always either rustically negligent, or bristling with pedantry.

These disadvantages with regard to public models of civil eloquence have in part affected the Italians; the few good prose writers of Italy have been historians; and it is observable that no writers exist in the department of what are called *Moral Essayists*, a class which, with us and the French, were the last depositaries of the rhetorical faculty when depressed to its lowest key. Two other circumstances may be noticed as unfavourable to an Italian rhetoric: one, to which we have adverted before, in the language itself, which is too loitering for the agile motion and the το ἀγχιστροφον of rhetoric; and the other in the constitution of the national mind, which is not reflective nor remarkably fanciful, the two qualities most indispensable to rhetoric. As a proof of the little turn for reflection which there is in the Italian mind, we may remind the reader that they have no meditative or philosophic poetry,* such as that of our Young, Cowper, Wordsworth,

* The nearest approach to reflective poetry which we ourselves remember in Italian literature, lies amongst the works of Salvator Rosa (the great painter)—where, however, it assumes too much the character of satire.

etc.; a class of poetry which existed very early indeed in the English literature (*e. g.*, Sir T. Davies, Lord Brooke, Henry More, etc.), and which in some shape has arisen at some stage of almost every European literature.

Of the Spanish rhetoric, *à priori*, we should have augured well; but the rhetoric of their pulpit in past times, which is all that we know of it, is vicious and unnatural; whilst, on the other hand, for eloquence profound and heartfelt, measuring it by those heart-stirring proclamations issued in all quarters of Spain during 1808-9, the national capacity must be presumed to be of the very highest order.

We are thus thrown back upon the French pulpit orators as the only considerable body of modern rhetoricians out of our own language. No writers are more uniformly praised; none are more entirely neglected. This is one of those numerous hypocrisies so common in matters of taste, where the critic is always ready with his good word as the readiest way of getting rid of the subject. To blame might be hazardous; for blame demands reasons; but praise enjoys a ready dispensation from all reasons and from all discrimination. Superstition, however, as it is under which the French rhetoricians hold their reputation, we have no thought of attempting any disturbance to it in so slight and incidental a

notice as this. Let critics by all means continue to invest them with every kind of imaginary splendour. Meantime let us suggest, as a judicious caution, that French rhetoric should be praised with a reference only to its own narrow standard; for it would be a most unfortunate trial of its pretensions to bring so meagre a style of composition into a close comparison with the gorgeous opulence of the English rhetoric of the same century. Under such a comparison two capital points of weakness would force themselves upon the least observant of critics; first, the defect of striking imagery; and secondly, the slenderness of the thoughts. The rhetorical manner is supported in the French writers chiefly by an abundance of *ohs* and *ahs;* by interrogatories, apostrophes, and startling exclamations; all which are mere mechanical devices for raising the style; but in the substance of the composition, apart from its dress, there is nothing properly rhetorical. The leading thoughts in all pulpit eloquence being derived from religion, and in fact the common inheritance of human nature, if they cannot be novel, for that very reason cannot be undignified; but for the same reason they are apt to become unaffecting and trite unless varied and individualized by new infusions of thought and feeling. The smooth monotony of the leading religious topics, as managed by the French orators, receives under

the treatment of Jeremy Taylor at each turn of the sentence a new flexure, or what may be called a separate *articulation*;* old thoughts are surveyed from novel stations and under various angles; and a field absolutely exhausted throws up eternally fresh verdure under the fructifying lava of burning imagery. *Human life*, for example, *is short; human happiness is frail*; how trite, how obvious a thesis! Yet in the beginning of the *Holy Dying*, upon that simplest of themes how magnificent a descant! Variations the most original upon a ground the most universal, and a sense of novelty diffused over truths coeval with human life! Finally, it may be remarked of the

* We may take the opportunity of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this; that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. Take any sentence you please, from Dr. Johnson, suppose, and it will be found to contain a thought, good or bad, fully preconceived. Whereas in Burke, whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. Some collateral adjunct of the main proposition, some temperament or restraint, some oblique glance at its remote affinities, will invariably be found to attend the progress of his sentences, like the spray from a waterfall, or the scintillations from the iron under the blacksmith's hammer. Hence whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences. This peculiarity is no doubt in some degree due to the habit of extempore speaking, but not to that only.

imagery in the French rhetoric that it is thinly sown, common-place, deficient in splendour, and above all merely ornamental; that is to say, it does no more than echo and repeat what is already said in the thought which it is brought to illustrate; whereas in Jeremy Taylor and in Burke, it will be found usually to extend and amplify the thought, or to fortify it by some indirect argument of its truth. Thus for instance in the passage above quoted from Taylor, upon the insensibility of man to the continual mercies of God, at first view the mind is staggered by the apparent impossibility that so infinite a reality, and of so continual a recurrence, should escape our notice; but the illustrative image, drawn from the case of a man standing at the bottom of the ocean, and yet insensible to that world of waters above him, from the uniformity and equality of its pressure, flashes upon us with a sense of something equally marvellous in a case which we know to be a physical fact. We are thus reconciled to the proposition by the same image which illustrates it.

In a single mechanical quality of good writing, that is in the structure of their sentences, the French rhetoricians, in common with French writers generally of that age, are superior to ours. This is what in common parlance is expressed (though inaccurately) by the word *style*, and is

the subject of the third part of the work before us. Dr. Whately, however, somewhat disappoints us by his mode of treating it. He alleges, indeed, with some plausibility, that his subject bound him to consider style no further than as it was related to the purpose of persuasion. But besides that it is impossible to treat it with effect in that mutilated section, even within the limits assumed, we are not able to trace any outline of the law or system by which Dr. Whately has been governed in the choice of his topics; we find many very acute remarks delivered, but all in a desultory way, which leave the reader no means of judging how much of the ground has been surveyed and how much omitted. We regret also that he has not addressed himself more specifically to the question of English style, a subject which has not yet received the comprehensive discussion which it merits. In the age of our great rhetoricians, it is remarkable that the English language had never been made an object of conscious attention. No man seems to have reflected that there was a wrong and a right in the choice of words, in the choice of phrases, in the mechanism of sentences, or even in the grammar. Men wrote eloquently because they wrote feelingly; they wrote idiomatically, because they wrote naturally and without affectation; but if a false or acephalous structure of sentence, if a barbarous idiom or an exotic word

happened to present itself, no writer of the seventeenth century seems to have had any such scrupulous sense of the dignity belonging to his own language as should make it a duty to reject it or worth his while to remodel a line. The fact is that verbal criticism had not as yet been very extensively applied even to the classical languages; the Scaligers, Casaubon, and Salmasius, were much more critics on things than critics philologically. However, even in that age, the French writers were more attentive to the cultivation of their mother tongue than any other people. It is justly remarked by Schlegel, that the most worthless writers amongst the French as to matter generally take pains with their diction; or perhaps it is more true to say, that with equal pains in their language it is more easy to write well than in one of greater compass. It is also true that the French are indebted for their greater purity from foreign idioms, to their much more limited acquaintance with foreign literature. Still, with every deduction from the merit, the fact is as we have said; and it is apparent not only by innumerable evidences in the *concrete*, but by the superiority of all their *abstract* auxiliaries in the art of writing. We English, even at this day, have no learned grammar of our language; nay, we have allowed the blundering attempt in that department of an imbecile stranger (Lindley Mur-

ray) to supersede the learned (however imperfect) works of our own Wallis, Lowth, etc.; we have also no sufficient dictionary; and we have no work at all, sufficient or insufficient, on the phrases and idiomatic niceties of our language, corresponding to the works of Vaugelas and others for the French.

Hence an anomaly, not found perhaps in any literature but ours, that the most eminent English writers do not write their mother tongue without continual violations of propriety. With the single exception of William Wordsworth, who has paid an honourable attention to the purity and accuracy of his English, we believe that there is not one celebrated author of this day who has written two pages consecutively, without some flagrant impropriety in the grammar (such as the eternal confusion of the preterite with the past participle, confusion of verbs transitive with intransitive, etc.), or some violation more or less of the vernacular idiom. If this last sort of blemish does not occur so frequently in modern books, the reason is that since Dr. Johnson's time the freshness of the idiomatic style has been too frequently abandoned for the lifeless mechanism of a style purely bookish and artificial.

The practical judgments of Dr. Whately are such as will seldom be disputed. Dr. Johnson, for his triads and his antithetic balances, he taxes

more than once with a plethoric and tautologic tympany of sentence; and in the following passage with a very happy illustration: "Sentences which might have been expressed as simple ones are expanded into complex ones by the addition of clauses which add little or nothing to the sense; and which have been compared to the false handles and key-holes with which furniture is decorated, that serve no other purpose than to *correspond to the real ones.* Much of Dr. Johnson's writing is chargeable with this fault."

We recollect a little biographic sketch of Dr. Johnson, published immediately after his death, in which, amongst other instances of desperate tautology, the author quotes the well-known lines from the Doctor's imitation of Juvenal—

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind from China to Peru;"

and contends, with some reason, that this is saying in effect,—"*Let observation, with extensive observation, observe mankind extensively.*" Certainly Dr. Johnson was the most faulty writer in this kind of inanity that ever has played tricks with language.* On the other hand, Burke was the

* The following illustration, however, from Dr. Johnson's critique on Prior's *Solomon*, is far from a happy one: "He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; had often *polished* it to *elegance*, *dignified* it with *splendour*, and

least so; and we are petrified to find him described by Dr. Whately as a writer "qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam," and as, on that account, offensive to good taste. The understanding of Burke was even morbidly impatient of tautology; progress and motion, everlasting motion, was a mere necessity of his intellect. We will venture to offer a king's ransom for one unequivocal case of tautology from the whole circle of Burke's writings. The *principium indiscernibilium*, upon which Leibnitz affirmed the impossibility of finding any two leaves of a tree that should be mere duplicates of each other, in what we might call the *palmistry* of their natural markings, may be applied to Burke as safely as to nature; no two propositions, we are satisfied, can be found in *him*, which do not contain a larger variety than is requisite to their sharp discrimination.

Speaking of the advantages for energy and effect in the license of arrangement open to the ancient languages, especially to the Latin, Dr. Whately cites the following sentence from the

sometimes *heightened* it to *sublimity*; he perceived in it many excellences, and did not perceive that it wanted that, without which all others are of small avail, the power of *engaging attention* and *alluring curiosity*." The parts marked in italics are those to which Dr. Whately would object as tautologic. Yet this objection can hardly be sustained; the ideas are all sufficiently discriminated; the fault is, that they are applied to no real corresponding differences in Prior.

opening of the 4th Book of Q. Curtius:—*Darius tanti modo exercitûs rex, qui, triumphantis magis quam dimicantis more, curru sublimis inierat prælium,—per loca, quæ prope immensis agminibus compleverat, jam inania, et ingenti solitudine vasta fugiebat.* "The effect," says he, "of the concluding verb, placed where it is, is most striking."* The sentence is far enough from a good one; but, confining ourselves to the sort of merit for which it is here cited as a merit peculiar to the Latin, we must say, that the very same position of the verb, with a finer effect, is attainable, and in fact often attained in English sentences; see, for instance, the passage in Richard's opening soliloquy —*Now is the winter of our discontent*—and ending, *In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.* See also another at the beginning of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* on the thanklessness of the labour employed upon the *foundations* of truth, which, says he, like those of buildings, "are in the bosom of the earth concealed." The fact is, that the common cases of inversion, such as the suspension of the verb to the end, and the anticipation of the objective case at the beginning, are not sufficient illustrations of the Latin structure. All this can be done as

* We wish that in so critical a notice of an effect derived from the fortunate position of a single word, Dr. Whately had not shocked our ears by this hideous collision of a double "*is*,"—"where it *is*, *is*." Dreadful!

well by the English. It is not mere power of inversion, but of self-intrication, and of self-dislocation, which mark the extremity of the artificial structure; that power by which a sequence of words, that naturally is directly consecutive, commences, intermits, and reappears at a remote part of the sentence, like what is called drake-stone on the surface of a river. In this power, the Greek is almost as much below the Latin as all modern languages; and in this, added to its elliptic brevity of connexion and transition, and to its wealth in abstractions, "the long-tailed words in *osity* and *ation*," lie the peculiar capacities of the Latin for rhetoric.

Dr. Whately lays it down as a maxim in rhetoric, that "elaborate stateliness is always to be regarded as a worse fault than the slovenliness and languor which accompany a very loose style." But surely this is a rash position; stateliness the most elaborate, in an *absolute* sense, is no fault at all; though it may happen to be so in relation to a given subject, or to any subject under given circumstances. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords." Reading these words, who would not be justly offended in point of taste, had his feast been characterised by elegant simplicity? Again, at a coronation, what can be more displeasing to a philosophic taste than a pretended chastity of ornament, at war

with the very purposes of a solemnity essentially magnificent? An imbecile friend of ours, in 1825, brought us a sovereign of a new coinage, "Which," said he, "I admire, because it is so elegantly simple." This, he flattered himself, was thinking like a man of taste. But mark how we sent him to the right about. "And *that*, weak-minded friend, is exactly the thing which a coin ought not to be: the duty of a golden coin is to be as florid as it can, rich with Corinthian ornaments, and as gorgeous as a peacock's tail." So of rhetoric, imagine that you read these words of introduction, "*And on a set day, Tullius Cicero returned thanks to Cæsar on behalf of Marcus Marcellus*," what sort of a speech is reasonably to be expected? The whole purpose being a festal and ceremonial one, thanksgiving its sole burden first and last, what else than the most "elaborate stateliness?" If it were not stately, and to the very verge of the pompous, Mr. Wolf would have had one argument more than he had, and a better than any he has produced, for suspecting the authenticity of that thrice famous oration.

In the course of his dissertation on style, Dr. Whately very needlessly enters upon the thorny question of the *quiddity*, or characteristic difference, of poetry as distinguished from prose.*

* "*As distinguished from prose.*" Here is one of the many instances in which a false answer is prepared beforehand,

We could much have wished that he had forborne to meddle with a *quæstio vexata* of this nature, both because in so incidental and cursory a discussion it could not receive a proper investigation, and because Dr. Whately is apparently not familiar with much of what has been written on that subject. On a matter so slightly discussed, we shall not trouble ourselves to enter further, than to express our astonishment that a logician like Dr. Whately should have allowed himself to deliver so nugatory an argument as this which follows:—"Any composition in *verse* (and none that is not), is always called, whether good or bad, a poem, by all who have no favourite hypothesis to maintain." And the inference manifestly is, that it is rightly so called. Now, if a man has taken up any fixed opinion on the subject, no matter

by falsely shaping the question. The accessary circumstance, as "*distinguished from prose*," already prepares a false answer by the very terms of the problem. Poetry *cannot* be distinguished from prose without presupposing the whole question at issue. Those who deny that metre is the characteristic distinction of poetry, deny by implication, that prose *can* be truly opposed to poetry. Some have imagined that the proper opposition was between poetry and science; but suppose that this is an imperfect opposition, and suppose even that there is no adequate opposition, or counterpole, this is no more than happens in many other cases. One of two poles is often without a name, even where the idea is fully assignable in analysis. But, at all events, the expression, as "distinguished from prose," is a subtle instance of a *petitio principii*.

whether wrong or right, and has reasons to give for his opinion, this man comes under the description of those who have a favourite hypothesis to maintain. It follows, therefore, that the only class of people whom Dr. Whately will allow as unbiassed judges on this question—a question not of fact, but of opinion—are those who have, and who profess to have, no opinion at all upon the subject; or, having one, have no reasons for it. But, apart from this contradiction, how is it possible that Dr. Whately should, in *any* case plead a popular usage of speech as of any weight in a philosophic argument? Still more, how is it possible in *this* case, where the accuracy of the popular usage is the very thing in debate, so that, if pleaded at all, it must be pleaded as its own justification? Alms-giving, and nothing but alms-giving, is universally called *charity*, and mistaken for the charity of the Scriptures, by all who have no favourite hypothesis to maintain; *i.e.*, by all the inconsiderate. But Dr. Whately will hardly draw any argument from this usage in defence of that popular notion.

In speaking thus freely of particular passages in Dr. Whately's book, we are so far from meaning any disrespect to him, that, on the contrary, if we had not been impressed with the very highest respect for his talents, by the acuteness and originality which illuminate every part of his

book, we could not have allowed ourselves to spend as much time upon the whole, as we have in fact spent upon single paragraphs. In reality, there is not a section of his work which has not furnished us with occasion for some profitable speculations; and we are, in consequence, most anxious to see his *Logic*, which treats a subject so much more important than *Rhetoric*, and so obstinately misrepresented, that it would delight us much to anticipate a radical exposure of the errors on this subject, taken up from the days of Lord Bacon. It has not fallen in our way to quote much from Dr. Whately *totidem verbis;* our apology for which will be found in the broken and discontinuous method of treatment by short sections and paragraphs, which a subject of this nature has necessarily imposed upon him. Had it coincided with our purpose to go more into detail, we could have delighted our readers with some brilliant examples of philosophical penetration, applied to questions interesting from their importance or difficulty, with the happiest effect. As it is, we shall content ourselves with saying, that in any elementary work it has not been our fortune to witness a rarer combination of analytical acuteness with severity of judgment; and when we add that these qualities are recommended by a scholar-like elegance of manner, we suppose it hardly necessary to add, that Dr. Whately's is

incomparably the best book of its class, since Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric.*

[NOTE.—In what is said at the beginning of this paper of the true meaning of the Enthymeme, as determined by Facciolati, we must be understood with an exclusive reference to rhetoric. In logic the old acceptation cannot be disturbed.]

# CONVERSATION.

# CONVERSATION.

AMONGST the arts connected with the *elegancies* of social life, in a degree which nobody denies, is the art of conversation; but in a degree which almost everybody denies, if one may judge by their neglect of its simplest rules, this same art is not less connected with the *uses* of social life. Neither the luxury of conversation, nor the possible benefit of conversation, is to be found under that rude administration of it which generally prevails. Without an art, without some simple system of rules, gathered from experience of such contingencies as are most likely to mislead the practice, when left to its own guidance, no act of man nor effort accomplishes its purposes in perfection. The sagacious Greek would not so much as drink a glass of wine amongst a few friends without a systematic art to guide him, and a regular form of polity to control him, which art and which polity (begging Plato's pardon) were better than any of more ambitious aim in his Republic. Every *symposium* had its set of rules, and rigorous they were; had

its own *symposiarch* to govern it, and a tyrant he was. Elected democratically, he became, when once installed, an autocrat not less despotic than the King of Persia. Purposes still more slight and fugitive have been organized into arts. Taking soup gracefully, under the difficulties opposed to it by a dinner dress at that time fashionable, was reared into an art about forty-five years ago by a Frenchman, who lectured upon it to ladies in London; and the most brilliant duchess of that day, viz., the Duchess of of Devonshire, was amongst his best pupils. Spitting, if the reader will pardon the mention of so gross a fact, was shown to be a very difficult art, and publicly prelected upon about the same time, in the same great capital. The professors in this faculty were the hackney-coachmen; the pupils were gentlemen, who paid a guinea each for three lessons; the chief problem in this system of hydraulics being to throw the salivating column in a parabolic curve from the centre of Parliament Street, when driving four-in-hand, to the foot pavements, right and left, so as to alarm the consciences of guilty peripatetics on either side. The ultimate problem, which closed the *curriculum* of study, was held to lie in spitting round a corner; when *that* was mastered, the pupil was entitled to his doctor's degree. Endless are the purposes of man, merely festal or merely

comic, and aiming but at the momentary life of a cloud, which have earned for themselves the distinction and apparatus of a separate art. Yet for conversation, the great paramount purpose of social meetings, no art exists or has been attempted.

*That* seems strange, but is not really so. A limited process submits readily to the limits of a technical system; but a process so unlimited as the interchange of thought, seems to reject them. And even, if an art of conversation were less unlimited, the means of carrying such an art into practical effect amongst so vast a variety of minds, seems wanting. Yet again, perhaps, after all, this may rest on a mistake. What we begin by misjudging is the particular phasis of conversation which brings it under the control of art and discipline. It is not in its relation to the intellect, that conversation ever has been improved or *will* be improved primarily, but in its relation to manners. Has a man ever mixed with what in technical phrase is called "good company," meaning company in the highest degree polished, company which (being or *not* being aristocratic as respects its composition) is aristocratic as respects the standard of its manners and usages? If he really *has*, and does not deceive himself from vanity or from pure inacquaintance with the world, in that case he must have remarked the

large effect impressed upon the grace and upon the freedom of conversation by a few simple instincts of real good breeding. Good breeding—what is it? There is no need in this place to answer that question comprehensively; it is sufficient to say, that it is made up chiefly of *negative* elements; that it shows itself far less in what it prescribes than it what it forbids. Now, even under this limitation of the idea, the truth is—that more will be done for the benefit of conversation by the simple magic of good manners (that is, chiefly by a system of forbearances), applied to the besetting vices of social intercourse, than ever *was* or *can* be done by all varieties of intellectual power assembled upon the same arena. Intellectual graces of the highest order may perish and confound each other when exercised in a spirit of ill-temper, or under the license of bad manners; whereas, very humble powers, when allowed to expand themselves colloquially in that genial freedom which is possible only under the most absolute confidence in the self-restraint of your collocutors, accomplish their purpose to a certainty, if it be the ordinary purpose of liberal amusement, and have a chance of accomplishing it, even when this purpose is the more ambitious one of communicating knowledge or exchanging new views upon truth.

In my own early years, having been formed by

nature too exclusively and morbidly for solitary thinking, I observed nothing. Seeming to have eyes, in reality I saw nothing. But it is a matter of no very uncommon experience—that, whilst the mere observers never become meditators, the mere meditators, on the other hand, may finally ripen into close observers. Strength of thinking, through long years, upon innumerable themes, will have the effect of disclosing a vast variety of questions, to which it soon becomes apparent that answers are lurking up and down the whole field of daily experience; and thus an external experience which was slighted in youth, because it was a dark cipher that could be read into no meaning, a key that answered to no lock, gradually becomes interesting, as it is found to yield one solution after another to problems that have independently matured in the mind. Thus, for instance, upon the special functions of conversation, upon its powers, its laws, its ordinary diseases, and their appropriate remedies, in youth I never bestowed a thought or a care. I viewed it, not as one amongst the gay ornamental arts of the intellect, but as one amongst the dull necessities of business. Loving solitude too much, I understood the capacities of colloquial intercourse too little. And thus it is, though not for *my* reason, that most people estimate the intellectual relations of conversation. Let these, however, be

what they may, one thing seemed undeniable—that this world talked a great deal too much. It would be better for all parties, if nine in every ten of the *winged words*, flying about in this world (Homer's *epea pteroenta*) had their feathers clipped amongst men, or even amongst women, who have a right to a larger allowance of words. Yet, as it was quite out of my power to persuade the world into any such self-denying reformation, it seemed equally out of the line of my duties to nourish any moral anxiety in that direction. *To talk* seemed to me at that time in the same category as *to sleep;* not an accomplishment, but a base physical infirmity. As a moralist, I really was culpably careless upon the whole subject. I cared as little what absurdities men practised in their vast tennis-courts of conversation, where the ball is flying backwards and forwards to no purpose for ever, as what tricks Englishmen might play with their monstrous national debt. Yet at length what I disregarded on any principle of moral usefulness, I came to make an object of the profoundest interest on principles of art. *Betting;* in like manner, and *wagering*, which apparently had no moral value, and for that reason had been always slighted as inconsiderable arts (though, by the way, they always had one valuable use, viz., that of evading quarrels, since a bet summarily intercepts an altercation), rose suddenly into a

philosophic rank, when successively, Huygens, the Bernoullis, and De Moivre, were led by the suggestion of these trivial practices amongst men, to throw the light of a high mathematical analysis upon the whole doctrine of Chances. Lord Bacon had been led to remark the capacities of conversation, as an organ for sharpening one particular mode of intellectual power. Circumstances, on the other hand, led me into remarking the special capacities of conversation, as an organ for absolutely creating another mode of power. Let a man have read, thought, studied, as much as he may, rarely will he reach his possible advantages as a *ready* man, unless he has exercised his powers much in conversation—that, I think, was Lord Bacon's idea. Now, this wise and useful remark points in a direction not objective, but subjective; that is, it does not promise any absolute extension to truth itself, but only some greater facilities to the man who expounds or diffuses the truth. Nothing will be done for truth objectively that would not at any rate be done; but, subjectively, it will be done with more fluency, and at less cost of exertion to the doer. On the contrary, my own growing reveries on the latent powers of conversation (which, though a thing that then I hated, yet challenged at times unavoidably my attention) pointed to an absolute birth of new insight into the truth itself, as inseparable from the

finer and more scientific exercise of the talking art. It would not be the brilliancy, the ease, or the adroitness of the expounder, that would benefit; but the absolute interests of the thing expounded. A feeling dawned on me of a secret magic lurking in the peculiar life, velocities, and contagious ardour of conversation, quite separate from any which belonged to books; arming a man with new forces, and not merely with a new dexterity in wielding the old ones. I felt, and in this I could not be mistaken, as too certainly it was a fact of my own experience, that in the electric kindling of life between two minds—and far less from the kindling natural to conflict (though *that* also is something), than from the kindling through sympathy with the object discussed, in its momentary coruscation of shifting phases—there sometimes arise glimpses, and shy revelations of affinity, suggestion, relation, analogy, that could not have been approached through any avenues of methodical study. Great organists find the same effect of inspiration, the same result of power creative and revealing, in the mere movement and velocity of their own voluntaries, like the heavenly wheels of Milton, throwing off fiery flakes and bickering flames; these *impromptu* torrents of music create rapturous *fioriture*, beyond all capacity in the artist to register, or afterwards to imitate. The reader must be well aware that

many philosophic instances exist where a change in the degree makes a change in the kind. Usually this is otherwise; the prevailing rule is, that the principle subsists unaffected by any possible variation in the amount or degree of the force. But a large class of exceptions must have met the reader, though, from want of a pencil, he has improperly omitted to write them down in his pocket-book—cases, viz., 1*stly*, where upon passing beyond a certain point in the graduation, an alteration takes place suddenly in the *kind* of effect, a new direction is given to the power. Some illustration of this truth occurs in conversation, where a velocity in the movement of thought is made possible (and often natural), greater than ever can arise in methodical books; and where, 2*ndly*, approximations are moreobvious and easily effected between things too remote for a steadier contemplation. One remarkable evidence of a *specific* power lying hid in conversation may be seen in such writings as have moved by impulses most nearly resembling those of conversation; for instance, in those of Edmund Burke. For one moment, reader, pause upon the spectacle of two contrasted intellects, Burke's and Johnson's: one an intellect essentially going forward, governed by the very necessity of growth—by the law of motion in advance; the latter, essentially an intellect retrogressive, retrospective, and throwing

itself back on its own steps. This original difference was aided accidentally in Burke by the tendencies of political partisanship, which, both from moving amongst moving things and uncertainties, as compared with the more stationary aspects of moral philosophy, and also from its more fluctuating and fiery passions, must unavoidably reflect in greater life the tumultuary character of conversation. The result from these original differences of intellectual constitution, aided by these secondary differences of pursuit, is, that Dr. Johnson never, in any instance, GROWS a truth before your eyes, whilst in the act of delivering it or moving towards it. All that he offers up to the end of the chapter he had when he began. But to Burke, such was the prodigious elasticity of his thinking, equally in his conversation and in his writings, the mere act of movement became the principle or cause of movement. Motion propagated motion, and life threw off life. The very violence of a projectile, as thrown by *him*, caused it to rebound in fresh forms, fresh angles, splintering, coruscating, which gave out thoughts as new (and as startling) to himself as they are to his reader. In this power, which might be illustrated largely from the writings of Burke, is seen something allied to the powers of a prophetic seer, who is compelled oftentimes into seeing things, as unexpected by himself as by others.

Now in conversation, considered as to its *tendencies* and capacities, there sleeps an intermitting spring of such sudden revelation, showing much of the same general character; a power putting on a character *essentially* differing from the character worn by the power of books.

If then, in the *colloquial* commerce of thought, there lurked a power not shared by other modes of that great commerce, a power separate and *sui generis*, next it was apparent that a great art must exist somewhere, applicable to this power; not in the Pyramids, or in the tombs of Thebes, but in the unwrought quarries of men's minds, so many and so dark. There was an art missing. If an art, then an artist was missing. If the art (as we say of foreign mails) were "due," then the artist was "due." How happened it that this great man never made his appearance? But perhaps he *had*. Many persons think Dr. Johnson the *exemplar* of conversational power. I think otherwise, for reasons which I shall soon explain, and far sooner I should look for such an *exemplar* in Burke. But neither Johnson nor Burke, however they might rank as *powers*, was the *artist* that I demanded. Burke valued not at all the reputation of a great performer in conversation; he scarcely contemplated the skill as having a real existence; and a man will never be an artist who does not value his art, or even recognise it as an

object distinctly defined. Johnson, again, relied sturdily upon his natural powers for carrying him aggressively through all conversational occasions, or difficulties that English society, from its known character and composition, could be supposed likely to bring forward, without caring for any art or system of rules that might give further effect to that power. If a man is strong enough to knock down ninety-nine in a hundred of all antagonists, in spite of any advantages as to pugilistic science, which they may possess over himself, he is not likely to care for the improbable case of a hundredth man appearing with strength equal to his own, superadded to the utmost excess of that artificial skill which is wanting in himself. Against such a contingency it is not worth while going to the cost of a regular pugilistic training. Half a century might not bring up a case of actual call for its application. Or, if it did, for a single *extra* case of that nature, there would always be a resource in the *extra* (and, strictly speaking, foul) arts of kicking, scratching, pinching, and tearing hair.

The conversational powers of Johnson were narrow in compass, however strong within their own essential limits. As a *conditio sine qua non*, he did not absolutely demand a *personal* contradictor by way of 'stoker' to supply fuel and keep up his steam, but he demanded at least a *subject* teeming

with elements of known contradictory opinion, whether linked to partisanship or not. His views of all things tended to negation, never to the positive and the creative. Hence may be explained a fact, which cannot have escaped any keen observer of those huge Johnsonian *memorabilia* which we possess, viz., that the gyration of his flight upon any one question that ever came before him was so exceedingly brief. There was no process, no evolution, no movement of self-conflict or preparation; a word, a distinction, a pointed antithesis, and, above all, a new abstraction of the logic involved in some popular fallacy, or doubt, or prejudice, or problem, formed the utmost of his efforts. He dissipated some casual perplexity that had gathered in the eddies of conversation, but he contributed nothing to any weightier interest; he unchoked a strangulated sewer in some blind alley, but what river is there that felt his cleansing power? There is no man that can cite any single error which Dr. Johnson unmasked, or any important truth which he expanded. Nor is this extraordinary. Dr. Johnson had not within himself the fountain of such power, having not a brooding or natural philosophic intellect. Philosophy in any acquired sense he had none. How else could it have happened that, upon David Hartley, upon David Hume, upon Voltaire, upon Rousseau, the true or

the false philosophy of his own day, beyond a personal sneer founded on some popular slander, he had nothing to say and said nothing? A new world was moulding itself in Dr. Johnson's meridian hours, new generations were ascending, and "other palms were won." Yet of all this the Doctor suspected nothing. Countrymen and contemporaries of the Doctor's, brilliant men, but (as many think) trifling men, such as Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield, already in the middle of that eighteenth century, could read the signs of the great changes advancing. Already they started in horror from the portents which which rose before them in Paris, like the procession of regal phantoms before Macbeth, and have left in their letters records undeniable (such as now read like Cassandra prophecies) that already they had noticed tremors in the ground below their feet, and sounds in the air, running before the great convulsions under which Europe was destined to rock full thirty years later. Many instances, during the last war, showed us, that in the frivolous dandy might often lurk the most fiery and accomplished of *aides-de-camp;* and these cases show that men, in whom the world sees only elegant *roués*, sometimes from carelessness, sometimes from want of opening for display, conceal qualities of penetrating sagacity, and a learned spirit of observation, such as may be looked for

vainly in persons of more solemn and academic pretension. But there was a greater defect in Dr. Johnson for purposes of conversation than merely want of eye for the social phenomena rising around him. He had no eye for such phenomena, because he had a somnolent want of interest in them; and why? because he had little interest in man. Having no sympathy with human nature in its struggles, or faith in the progress of man, he could not be supposed to regard with much interest any forerunning symptoms of changes that to him were themselves indifferent. And the reason that he felt thus careless was the desponding taint in his blood. It is good to be of a melancholic temperament, as all the ancient physiologists held, but only if the melancholy is balanced by fiery aspiring qualities, not when it gravitates essentially to the earth. Hence the drooping, desponding character, and the monotony of the estimate which Dr. Johnson applied to life. We were all in *his* view, miserable, scrofulous wretches; the "strumous diathesis" was developed in our flesh, or soon would be; and but for his piety, which was the best indication of some greatness latent within him, he would have suggested to all mankind a nobler use for garters than any which regarded knees. In fact, I believe, that, but for his piety, he would not only have counselled hanging in general, but hanged himself

in particular. Now this gloomy temperament, not as an occasional but as a permanent state, is fatal to the power of brilliant conversation, in so far as that power rests upon raising a continual succession of topics, and not merely of using with lifeless talent the topics offered by others. Man is the central interest about which revolve all the fleeting phenomena of life; these secondary interests demand the first; and with the little knowledge about them which must follow from little care about them, there can be no salient fountain of conversational themes. "*Pectus*," says Quintilian, "*id est quod disertum facit:—The heart* (and not the brain) *is that which makes a man eloquent.*" From the heart, from an interest of love or hatred, of hope or care, springs all permanent eloquence; and the elastic spring of conversation is gone, if the talker is a mere showy man of talent, pulling at an oar which he detests.

What an index might be drawn up of subjects interesting to human nature, and suggested by the events of the Johnsonian period, upon which the Doctor ought to have talked, and must have talked, if his interest in man had been catholic, but on which the Doctor is not recorded to have uttered one word! Visiting Paris once in his whole life, he applied himself diligently to the measuring of what? Of gilt mouldings and diapered panels! Yet books, it will be said, suggest

topics as well as life, and the moving sceneries of life; and surely Dr. Johnson had *this* fund to draw upon? No; for though he had read much in a desultory way, he had studied nothing;* and, without that sort of systematic reading, it is but a rare chance that books can be brought to bear effectually, and yet indirectly, upon conversation; whilst to make them directly and formally the subjects of discussion, pre-supposes either a learned audience, or, if the audience is not so, much pedantry and much arrogance in the talker.

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THE flight of our human hours, not really more rapid at any one moment than another, yet oftentimes to our feelings *seems* more rapid, and this flight startles us like guilty things with a more

* "*Had studied nothing:*"—It may be doubted whether Dr. Johnson understood any one thing thoroughly, except Latin; not that he understood even *that*, with the elaborate and circumstantial accuracy required for the editing critically of a Latin classic. But if he had less than *that*, he also had more: He *possessed* that language in a way that no extent of mere critical knowledge could confer. He wrote it genially, not as one translating into it painfully from English, but as one using it for his original organ of thinking. And in Latin verse he expressed himself at times with the energy and freedom of a Roman. With Greek his acquaintance was far more slender.

affecting *sense* of its rapidity, when a distant church-clock strikes in the night-time, or when, upon some solemn summer evening, the sun's disc, after settling for a minute with farewell horizontal rays, suddenly drops out of sight. The record of our loss in such a case seems to us the first intimation of its possibility; as if we could not be made sensible that the hours were perishable until it is announced to us that already they have perished. We feel a perplexity of distress when that which seems to us the cruellest of injuries, a robbery committed upon our dearest possession by the conspiracy of the world outside, seems also, as in part, a robbery sanctioned by our own collusion. The world, and the customs of the world, never cease to levy taxes upon our time; that is true, and so far the blame is not ours; but the particular *degree* in which we suffer by this robbery depends much upon the weakness with which we ourselves become parties to the wrong, or the energy with which we resist it. Resisting or not, however, we are doomed to suffer a bitter pang as often as the irrecoverable flight of our time is brought home with keenness to our hearts. The spectacle of a lady floating over the sea in a boat, and waking suddenly from sleep to find her magnificent rope of pearl-necklace, by some accident detached at one end from its fastenings, the loose string hanging down into the water, and

pearl after pearl slipping off for ever into the abyss, brings before us the sadness of the case. That particular pearl, which at the very moment is rolling off into the unsearchable deeps, carries its own separate reproach to the lady's heart. But it is more deeply reproachful as the representative of so many others, uncounted pearls, that have already been swallowed up irrecoverably whilst she was yet sleeping, and of many beside that must follow, before any remedy can be applied to what we may call this jewelly hæmorrhage. A constant hæmorrhage of the same kind is wasting our jewelly hours. A day has perished from our brief calendar of days: and *that* we could endure; but this day is no more than the reiteration of many other days, days counted by thousands, that have perished to the same extent and by the same unhappy means, viz., the evil usages of the world made effectual and ratified by our own *lâcheté*. Bitter is the upbraiding which we seem to hear from a secret monitor—"My friend, you make very free with your days: pray, how many do you expect to have? What is your rental, as regards the total harvest of days which this life is likely to yield?" Let us consider. Threescore years and ten produce a total sum of 25,550 days; to say nothing of some seventeen or eighteen more that will be payable to you as a *bonus* on account of leap years. Now

out of this total, one-third must be deducted at a blow for a single item, viz., sleep. Next, on account of illness, of recreation, and the serious occupations spread over the surface of life, it will be little enough to deduct another third. Recollect also that twenty years will have gone from the earlier end of your life (viz., about seven thousand days) before you can have attained any skill or system, or any definite purpose in the distribution of your time. Lastly, for that single item which, amongst the Roman armies, was indicated by the technical phrase "*corpus curare*," tendance on the animal necessities, viz., eating, drinking, washing, bathing, and exercise, deduct the smallest allowance consistent with propriety, and, upon summing up all these appropriations, you will not find so much as four thousand days left disposable for direct intellectual culture. Four thousand, or forty hundreds, will be a hundred forties; that is, according to the lax Hebrew method of indicating six weeks by the phrase of "forty days," you will have a hundred bills or drafts on Father Time, value six weeks each, as the whole period available for intellectual labour. A solid block of about eleven and a half continuous years is all that a long life will furnish for the development of what is most august in man's nature. After *that*, the night comes when no man can work; brain and arm will be alike

unserviceable; or, if the life should be unusually extended, the vital powers will be drooping as regards all motions in advance.

Limited thus severely in his *direct* approaches to knowledge, and in his approaches to that which is a thousand times more important than knowledge, viz., the conduct and discipline of the knowing faculty, the more clamorous is the necessity that a wise man should turn to account any INDIRECT and supplementary means towards the same ends; and amongst these means, a chief one, by right and potentially, is CONVERSATION. Even the primary means, books, study, and meditation, through errors from without and errors from within, are not *that* which they might be made. Too constantly, when reviewing his own efforts for improvement, a man has reason to say (indignantly, as one injured by others; penitentially, as contributing to this injury himself), "Much of my studies have been thrown away; many books which were useless, or worse than useless, I have read; many books which ought to have been read, I have left unread; such is the sad necessity under the absence of all preconceived plan; and the proper road is first ascertained when the journey is drawing to its close." In a wilderness so vast as that of books, to go astray often and widely is pardonable, because it is inevitable; and in proportion as the errors on

this primary field of study have been great, it is important to have reaped some compensatory benefits on the secondary field of conversation. Books teach by one machinery, conversation by another; and, if these resources were trained into correspondence to their own separate ideals, they might become reciprocally the complements of each other. The false selection of books, for instance, might often be rectified at once by the frank collation of experiences which takes place in miscellaneous colloquial intercourse. But other and greater advantages belong to conversation for the effectual promotion of intellectual culture. Social discussion supplies the natural integration for the deficiencies of private and sequestered study. Simply to rehearse, simply to express in words amongst familiar friends, one's own intellectual perplexities, is oftentimes to clear them up. It is well known that the best means of learning is by teaching; the effort that is made for others is made eventually for ourselves; and the readiest method of illuminating obscure conceptions, or maturing such as are crude, lies in an earnest effort to make them apprehensible by others. Even this is but one amongst the functions fulfilled by conversation. Each separate individual in a company is likely to see any problem or idea under some difference of angle. Each may have some difference of views to com-

tribute, derived either from a different course of reading, or a different tenor of reflection, or perhaps a different train of experience. The advantages of colloquial discussion are not only often commensurate in *degree* to those of study; but they recommend themselves also as being different in *kind;* they are special and *sui generis.* It must, therefore, be important that so great an organ of intellectual development should not be neutralized by mismanagement, as generally it is, or neglected through insensibility to its latent capacities. The importance of the subject should be measured by its relation to the interests of the intellect; and on this principle we do not scruple to think that, in reviewing our own experience of the causes most commonly at war with the free movement of conversation as it ought to be, we are in effect contributing hints for a new chapter in any future "Essay on the Improvement of the Mind." Watt's book under that title is really of little practical use; nor would it ever have been thought so had it not been patronized, in a spirit of partisanship, by a particular section of religious dissenters. Wherever *that* happens, the fortune of a book is made; for the sectarian impulse creates a sensible current in favour of the book; and the general or neutral reader yields passively to the motion of the current, without knowing or caring to know whence it is derived.

Our remarks must of necessity be cursory here, so that they will not need or permit much preparation; but one distinction, which is likely to strike on some minds, as to the two different purposes of conversation, ought to be noticed, since, otherwise, it will seem doubtful whether we have not confounded them; or, secondly, if we have *not* confounded them, which of the two it is that our remarks contemplate. In speaking above of conversation, we have fixed our view on those uses of conversation which are ministerial to intellectual culture; but, in relation to the majority of men, conversation is far less valuable as an organ of intellectual cultivation than of social enjoyment. For one man interested in conversation as a means of advancing his studies, there are fifty men whose interest in conversation points exclusively to convivial pleasure. This, as being a more extensive function of conversation, is so far the more dignified function; whilst, on the other hand, such a purpose as direct mental improvement seems by its superior gravity to challenge the higher rank. Yet, in fact, even here the more general purpose of conversation takes precedency; for when dedicated to the objects of festal delight, conversation rises by its tendency to the rank of a fine art. It is true, that not one man in a million rises to any distinction in this art; nor, whatever France may conceit of

herself, has any one nation, amongst other nations, a real precedency in this art. The artists are rare indeed; but still the art, as distinguished from the artist, may, by its difficulties, by the quality of its graces, and by the range of its possible brilliances, take rank as a *fine* art; or, at all events, according to its powers of execution, it tends to that rank; whereas the best order of conversation that is simply ministerial to a purpose of use, cannot pretend to a higher name than that of a *mechanic* art. But these distinctions, though they would form the grounds of a separate treatment in a regular treatise on conversation, may be practically neglected on this occasion, because the hints offered, by the generality of the terms in which they express themselves, may be applied indifferently to either class of conversation. The main diseases, indeed, which obstruct the healthy movement of conversation, recur everywhere; and alike whether the object be pleasure or profit in that free interchange of thought, almost universally the free interchange is obstructed in the very same way, by the very same defect of any controlling principle for sustaining the general rights and interests of the company, and by the same vices of self-indulgent indolence, or of callous selfishness, or of insolent vanity, in the individual talkers.

Let us fall back on the recollections of our

own experience. In the course of our life we heard much of what was reputed to be the select conversation of the day; and we have heard many of those who figured at the moment as effective talkers; yet in mere sincerity, and without a vestige of misanthropic retrospect, we must say, that never once has it happened to us to come away from any display of that nature without intense disappointment; and it always appeared to us that this failure (which soon ceased to be a *disappointment*) was inevitable by a necessity of the case. For here lay the stress of the difficulty: almost all depends in most trials of skill, upon the parity of those who are matched against each other. An ignorant person supposes that, to an able disputant, it must be an advantage to have a feeble opponent; whereas, on the contrary, it is ruin to him; for he cannot display his own powers but through something of a corresponding power in the resistance of his antagonist. A brilliant fencer is lost and confounded in playing with a novice; and the same thing takes place in playing at ball, or battledore, or in dancing, where a powerless partner does not enable you to shine the more, but reduces you to mere helplessness, and takes the wind altogether out of your sails. Now, if, by some rare good luck, the great talker—the protagonist—of the evening has been provided with a commensurate second, it is just possible that

something like a brilliant "passage of arms" may be the result, though much, even in that case, will depend on the chances of the moment for furnishing a fortunate theme; and even then, amongst the superior part of the company, a feeling of deep vulgarity and of mountebank display is inseparable from such an ostentatious duel of wit. On the other hand, supposing your great talker to be received like any other visitor, and turned loose upon the company, then he must do one of two things; either he will talk upon *outré* subjects specially tabooed to his own private use, in which case the great man has the air of a quack doctor addressing a mob from a street stage; or else he will talk like ordinary people upon popular topics; in which case the company, out of natural politeness, that they may not seem to be staring at him as a lion, will hasten to meet him in the same style, the conversation will become general, the great man will seem reasonable and well-bred; but at the same time we grieve to say it, the great man will have been extinguished by being drawn off from his exclusive ground. The dilemma, in short, is this: if the great talker attempts the plan of showing off by firing cannon-shot when everybody else is content with musketry, then undoubtedly he produces an impression, but at the expense of insulating himself from the sympathies of the company, and

standing aloof as a sort of monster hired to play tricks of funambulism for the night. Yet again, if he contents himself with a musket like other people, then for *us*, from whom he modestly hides his talent under a bushel, in what respect is he different from the man who *has* no such talent?

> "If she be not fair to me,
> What care I how fair she be?"

The reader, therefore, may take it upon the *d priori* logic of this dilemma, or upon the evidence of our own experience, that all reputation for brilliant talking is a visionary thing, and rests upon a sheer impossibility, viz., upon such a histrionic performance in a state of insulation from the rest of the company, as could not be effected, even for a single time, without a rare and difficult collusion, and could not, even for that single time, be endurable to a man of delicate and honourable sensibilities.

Yet surely Coleridge *had* such a reputation, and without needing any collusion at all; for Coleridge, unless he could have all the talk, would have none. But then this was not conversation It was not *colloquium*, or talking *with* the company, but *alloquium*, or talking *to* the company. As Madame de Staël observed, Coleridge talked, and *could* talk, only by monologue. Such a mode of systematic trespass upon the conversational rights of a whole party, gathered together under

pretence of amusement, is fatal to every purpose of social intercourse, whether that purpose be connected with direct use and the service of the intellect, or with the general graces and amenities of life. The result is the same, under whatever impulse such an outrage is practised; but the impulse is not always the same; it varies, and so far the criminal intention varies. In some people, this gross excess takes its rise in pure arrogance. They are fully aware of their own intrusion upon the general privileges of the company; they are aware of the temper in which it is likely to be received; but they persist wilfully in the wrong, as a sort of homage levied compulsorily upon those who may wish to resist it, but hardly *can* do so without a violent interruption, wearing the same shape of indecorum as that which they resent. In most people, however, it is not arrogance which prompts this capital offence against social rights, but a blind selfishness, yielding passively to its own instincts, without being distinctly, aware of the degree in which this self-indulgence trespasses on the rights of others. We see the same temper illustrated at times in travelling; a brutal person, as we are disposed at first to pronounce him, but more frequently one who yields unconsciously to a lethargy of selfishness, plants himself at the public fireplace, so as to exclude his fellow-travellers

from all but a fraction of the warmth. Yet he does not do this in a spirit of wilful aggression upon others; he has but a glimmering suspicion of the odious shape which his own act assumes to others, for the luxurious torpor of self-indulgence has extended its mists to the energy and clearness of his perceptions. Meantime, Coleridge's habit of soliloquizing through a whole evening of four or five hours, had its origin neither in arrogance nor in absolute selfishness. The fact was that he *could* not talk unless he were uninterrupted, and unless he were able to count upon this concession from the company. It was a silent contract between him and his hearers, that nobody should speak but himself. If any man objected to this arrangement, why did he come? For the custom of the place, the *lex loci*, being notorious, by coming at all he was understood to profess his allegiance to the autocrat who presided. It was not, therefore, by an insolent usurpation that Coleridge persisted in monology through his whole life, but in virtue of a concession from the kindness and respect of his friends. You could not be angry with him for using his privilege, for it was a privilege conferred by others, and a privilege which he was ready to resign as soon as any man demurred to it. But though reconciled to it by these considerations, and by the ability with which he used it, you could not but feel that it worked ill.

for all parties. Himself it tempted oftentimes into pure garrulity of egotism, and the listeners it reduced to a state of debilitated sympathy or of absolute torpor. Prevented by the custom from putting questions, from proposing doubts, from asking for explanations, reacting by no mode of mental activity, and condemned also to the mental distress of hearing opinions or doctrines stream past them by flights which they must not arrest for a moment, so as even to take a note of them, and which yet they could not often understand, or, seeming to understand, could not always approve, the audience sank at times into a listless condition of inanimate vacuity. To be acted upon for ever, but never to react, is fatal to the very powers by which sympathy must grow, or by which intelligent admiration can be evoked. For his own sake, it was Coleridge's interest to have forced his hearers into the active commerce of question and answer, of objection and demur. Not otherwise was it possible that even the attention could be kept from drooping, or the coherency and dependency of the arguments be forced into light.

The French rarely make a mistake of this nature. The graceful levity of the nation could not easily err in this direction, nor tolerate such deliration in the greatest of men. Not the gay temperament only of the French people, but the

particular qualities of the French language, which (however poor for the higher purposes of passion) is rich beyond all others for purposes of social intercourse, prompt them to rapid and vivacious exchange of thought. Tediousness, therefore, above all other vices, finds no countenance or indulgence amongst the French, excepting always in two memorable cases, viz., first, the case of tragic dialogue on the stage, which is privileged to be tedious by usage and tradition; and, secondly, the case (authorized by the best usages in living society) of narrators or *raconteurs*. This is a shocking anomaly in the code of French good taste as applied to conversation. Of all the bores whom man in his folly hesitates to hang, and Heaven in its mysterious wisdom suffers to propagate their species, the most insufferable is the teller of "good stories"—a nuisance that should be put down by cudgelling, a submersion in horse-ponds, or any mode of abatement, as summarily as men would combine to suffocate a vampire or a mad dog. This case excepted, however, the French have the keenest possible sense of all that is odious, and all that is ludicrous in prosing, and universally have a horror of *des longueurs*. It is not strange, therefore, that Madame de Staël noticed little as extraordinary in Coleridge beyond this one capital monstrosity of unlimited soliloquy, that being a peculiarity which she never could have witnessed in France;

and, considering the burnish of her French tastes in all that concerned colloquial characteristics, it is creditable to her forbearance that she noticed even this rather as a memorable fact than as the inhuman fault which it was. On the other hand, Coleridge was not so forbearing as regarded the brilliant French lady. He spoke of her to ourselves as a very frivolous person, and in short summary terms that disdained to linger on a subject so inconsiderable. It is remarkable, that Goethe and Schiller both conversed with Madame de Staël, like Coleridge, and both spoke of her afterwards in the same disparaging terms as Coleridge. But it is equally remarkable that Baron *William* Humboldt, who was personally acquainted with all the four parties—Madame de Staël, Goethe, Schiller, and Coleridge—gave it as his opinion (in letters subsequently published) that the lady had been calumniated through a very ignoble cause, viz., mere ignorance of the French language, or, at least, non-familiarity with the fluencies of *oral* French. Neither Goethe nor Schiller, though well acquainted with written French, had any command of it for purposes of *rapid* conversation; and Humboldt supposes that mere spite at the trouble which they found in limping after the lady so as to catch one thought that she uttered, had been the true cause of their unfavourable sentence upon her. Not malice

aforethought, so much as vindictive fury for the sufferings they had endured, accounted for their severity in the opinion of the diplomatic baron. He did not extend the same explanation to Coleridge's case, because, though even then in habits of intercourse with Coleridge, he had not heard of *his* interview with the lady, nor of the results from that interview; else what was true of the two German wits was true *à fortiori* of Coleridge: the Germans at least *read* French and talked it slowly, and occasionally understood it when talked by others. But Coleridge did none of these things. We are all of us well aware that Madame de Staël was *not* a trifler; nay, that she gave utterance at times to truths as worthy to be held oracular as any that were uttered by the three inspired wits, all philosophers, and bound to truth; but all poets, and privileged to be wayward. This we may collect from these anecdotes, that people accustomed to colloquial despotism, and who wield a sceptre within a circle of their own, are no longer capable of impartial judgments, and do not accommodate themselves with patience, or even with justice, to the pretensions of rivals; and were it only for this result of conversational tyranny, it calls clamorously for extinction by some combined action upon the part of society.

Is such a combination on the part of society possible as a sustained effort? We imagine that

it *is* in these times, and will be more so in the times which are coming. Formerly the social meetings of men and women, except only in capital cities, were few; and even in such cities the infusion of female influence was not broad and powerful enough for the correction of those great aberrations from just ideals which disfigured social intercourse. But great changes are proceeding: were it only by the vast revolution in our *means* of intercourse, laying open every village to the contagion of social temptations, the world of western Europe is tending more and more to a mode of living in public. Under such a law of life, conversation becomes a vital interest of every hour, that can no more suffer interruption from individual caprice or arrogance than the animal process of respiration from transient disturbances of health. Once, when travelling was rare, there was no fixed law for the usages of public rooms in inns or coffee-houses; the courtesy of individuals was the tenure by which men held their rights. If a morose person detained the newspaper for hours, there was no remedy. At present, according to the circumstances of the case, there are strict regulations, which secure to each individual his own share of the common rights.

A corresponding change will gradually take place in the usages which regulate conversation. It

will come to be considered an infringement of the general rights for any man to detain the conversation, or arrest its movement, for more than a short space of time, which gradually will be more and more defined. This one curtailment of arrogant pretensions will lead to others. Egotism will no longer freeze the openings to intellectual discussions; and conversation will then become, what it never *has* been before, a powerful ally of education and generally of self-culture. The main diseases that besiege conversation at present are—1*st*, The want of *timing*. Those who are not recalled, by a sense of courtesy and equity, to the continual remembrance that, in appropriating too large a share of the conversation, they are committing a fraud upon their companions, are beyond all control of monitory hints of reproof, which do not take a direct and open shape of personal remonstrance; but this, where the purpose of the assembly is festive and convivial, bears too harsh an expression for most people's feelings. That objection, however, would not apply to any mode of admonition that was universally established. A public memento carries with it no personality. For instance, in the Roman law-courts, no advocate complained of the *clepsydra*, or water time-piece, which regulated the duration of his pleadings. Now such a contrivance would not be impracticable at an after-

dinner talk. To invert the clepsydra, when all the water had run out, would be an act open to any one of the guests, and liable to no misconstruction, when this check was generally applied, and understood to be a simple expression of public defence, not of private rudeness or personality. The clepsydra ought to be filled with some brilliantly-coloured fluid, to be placed in the centre of the table, and with the capacity, at the very most, of the little minute-glasses used for regulating the boiling of eggs. It would obviously be insupportably tedious to turn the glass every two or three minutes; but to do so occasionally would avail as a sufficient memento to the company. 2*nd*, Conversation suffers from the want of some discretional power, lodged in an individual for controlling its movements. Very often it sinks into flats of insipidity through mere accident. Some trifle has turned its current upon ground, where few of the company have anything to say —the commerce of thought languishes; and the consciousness that it *is* languishing about a narrow circle, "unde pedem proferre pudor vetat," operates for the general refrigeration of the company. Now the ancient Greeks had an officer appointed over every convivial meeting, whose functions applied to all cases of doubt or interruption that could threaten the genial harmony, or, perhaps, the genial movement intellectually, of the com-

pany. We also have such officers, presidents, vice-presidents, etc.; and we need only to extend their powers so that they may exercise over the movement of the conversation the beneficial influence of the Athenian *symposiarch*. At present the evil is, that conversation has no authorized originator; it is servile to the accidents of the moment, and generally these accidents are merely verbal. Some word or some name is dropped casually in the course of an illustration; and *that* is allowed to suggest a topic, though neither interesting to the majority of the persons present, nor leading naturally into other collateral topics, that are more so. Now in such cases it will be the business of the symposiarch to restore the interest of the conversation, and to rekindle its animation, by recalling it from any tracts of dulness or sterility into which it may have rambled. The natural *excursiveness* of colloquial intercourse, its tendency to advance by subtle links of association, is one of its advantages; but mere *vagrancy* from passive acquiescence in the direction given to it by chance or by any verbal accident, is amongst its worst diseases. The business of the symposiarch will be, to watch these morbid tendencies, which are not the deviations of graceful freedom, but the distortions of imbecility and collapse. His business it will also be, to derive occasions of discussion bearing a general and permanent

interest from the fleeting events or the casual disputes of the day. His business again it will be to bring back a subject that has been imperfectly discussed, and has yielded but half of the interest which it promises, under the interruption of any accident which may have carried the thoughts of the company into less attractive channels. Lastly, it should be an express office of education to form a particular style, cleansed from *verbiage*, from elaborate parenthesis, and from circumlocution,* as the only style fitted for a purpose which is one of pure enjoyment, and where every moment used by the speaker is deducted from a public stock.

Many other suggestions for the improvement of conversation might be brought forward within ampler limits; and especially for that class of conversation which moves by discussion, a whole code of regulations might be proposed that would equally promote the interests of the individual speakers, and the public interests of the truth involved in the question discussed. Meantime nobody is more aware than we are that no style of conversation is more essentially vulgar than that which moves by disputation. This is the vice of the young and the inexperienced, but

* *Circumlocution* and *parenthesis* agree in this—that they keep the attention in a painful condition of suspense. But suspense is anxiety.

especially of those amongst them who are fresh from academic life. But discussion is not necessarily disputation; and the two orders of conversation—*that*, on the one hand, which contemplates an interest of knowledge, and of the self-developing intellect; *that*, on the other hand, which forms one and the widest amongst the gay embellishments of life—will always advance together. Whatever there may remain of illiberal in the first (for, according to the remark of Burke, there is always something illiberal in the severer aspects of study until balanced by the influence of social amenities), will correct itself, or will tend to correct itself, by the model held up in the second; and thus the great organ of social intercourse, by means of speech, which hitherto has done little for man, except through the channel of its ministrations to the direct *business* of daily necessities, will at length rise into rivalship with books, and become fixed amongst the alliances of intellectual progress, not less than amongst the ornamental accomplishments of convivial life.

# SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE.

# SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE.

IT is asserted that this is the age of superficial knowledge: and amongst the proofs of this assertion we find encyclopædias and other popular abstracts of knowledge particularly insisted on. But in this notion, and its alleged proofs, there is equal error—wherever there is much diffusion of knowledge there must be a good deal of superficiality: prodigious extension implies a due proportion of weak intension: a sea-like expansion of knowledge will cover large shallows as well as large depths. But in that quarter in which it is superficially cultivated, the intellect of this age is properly opposed in any just comparison to an intellect without any culture at all:—leaving the deep soils out of the comparison, the shallow ones of the present day would in any preceding one have been barren wastes.

Of this our modern encyclopædias are the best proof. For whom are they designed, and by whom used? By those who in a former age would have gone to the fountain heads? No, but by those who in any age preceding the present would have drunk at no waters at all! Encyclopædias are the growth of the last hundred

years; not because those who were formerly students of higher learning have descended, but because those who were below encyclopædias have ascended. The greatness of the ascent is marked by the style in which the more recent encyclopædias are executed. At present they contain many original articles of great merit. As in the periodical literature of the age, so in the encyclopædias, it has become a matter of ambition with the publishers to retain the most eminent writers in each several department. And hence it is, that our encyclopædias now display one characteristic of this age—the very opposite of superficiality (and which on other grounds we are well assured of), viz., its tendency in science, no less than in other applications of industry, to extreme subdivision. In all the employments which are dependent in any degree upon the political economy of nations, this tendency is too obvious to have been overlooked.

Accordingly it has long been noticed for congratulation in manufactures and the useful arts, and for censure in the learned professions. We have now, it is alleged, no great and comprehensive lawyers like Coke; and the study of medicine is subdividing itself into a distinct ministry (as it were) not merely upon the several organs of the body (oculists, aurists, dentists, chiropodists, etc.) but almost upon the several diseases of the same

organ: one man is distinguished for the treatment of liver complaints of one class—a second for those of another class; one man for asthma—another for phthisis; and so on. As to the law, the evil (if it be one) lies in the complex state of society, which of necessity makes the laws complex: law itself is become unwieldy and beyond the grasp of one man's term of life and possible range of experience, and will never again come within them. With respect to medicine, the case is no evil but a great benefit—so long as the subdividing principle does not descend too low to allow of a perpetual reascent into the generalizing principle (the *τό commune*), which secures the unity of the science. In ancient times all the evil of such a subdivision was no doubt realized in Egypt: for there a distinct body of professors took charge of each organ of the body, not (as we may be assured) from any progress of the science outgrowing the time and attention of the general professor, but simply from an ignorance of the organic structure of the human body and the reciprocal action of the whole; an ignorance of the same kind which has led sailors seriously (and not merely, as may sometimes have happened, by way of joke) to reserve one ulcerated leg to their own management, whilst the other was given up to the management of the surgeon. With respect to law and medicine then, the dif-

ference between ourselves and our ancestors is not subjective but objective; not, *i. e.*, in our faculties who study them, but in the things themselves which are the objects of study: not we (the students) are grown less, but they (the studies) are grown bigger;—and that our ancestors did not subdivide as much as we do—was something of their luck, but no part of their merit. Simply as subdividers therefore to the extent which now prevails, we are less superficial than any former age. In all parts of science the same principle of subdivision holds; here therefore, no less than in those parts of knowledge which are the subjects of distinct civil professions, we are of necessity more profound than our ancestors; but, for the same reason, less comprehensive than they. Is it better to be a profound student or a comprehensive one? In some degree this must depend upon the direction of the studies: but generally, I think, it is better for the interests of knowledge that the scholar should aim at profundity, and better for the interests of the individual that he should aim at comprehensiveness. A due balance and equilibrium of the mind is best preserved by a large and multiform knowledge: but knowledge itself is best served by an exclusive (or at least paramount) dedication of one mind to one science. The first proposition is perhaps unconditionally

true: but the second with some limitations. There are such people as Leibnitzes on this earth; and their office seems not that of planets—to revolve within the limits of one system, but that of comets (according to the theory of some speculators)—to connect different systems together. No doubt there is much truth in this: a few Leibnitzes in every age would be of much use; but neither are many men fitted by nature for the part of Leibnitz, nor would the aspect of knowledge be better if they were. We should then have a state of Grecian life amongst us, in which every man individually would attain in a moderate degree all the purposes of the same understanding, but in which all the purposes of the same understanding would be but moderately attained. What I mean is this: let all the objects of the understanding in civil life or in science be represented by the letters of the alphabet: in Grecian life each man would separately go through all the letters in a tolerable way; whereas at present each letter is served by a distinct body of men. Consequently the Grecian individual is superior to the modern; but the Grecian whole is inferior: for the whole is made up of the individuals, and the Grecian individual repeats himself. Whereas, in modern life the whole derives its superiority from the very circumstances which constitute the inferiority of the parts; for modern

life is cast dramatically: and the difference is as between an army consisting of soldiers who should each individually be competent to go through the duties of a dragoon, of a hussar, of a sharp-shooter, of an artillery-man, of a pioneer, etc., and an army on its present composition, where the very inferiority of the soldier as an individual—his inferiority in compass and versatility of power and knowledge—is the very ground from which the army derives its superiority as a whole, viz., because it is the condition of the possibility of a total surrender of the individual to one exclusive pursuit. In science, therefore, and (to speak more generally) in the whole evolution of the human faculties, no less than in political economy, the progress of society brings with it a necessity of sacrificing the ideal of what is excellent for the individual, to the ideal of what is excellent for the whole. We need therefore not trouble ourselves (except as a speculative question) with the comparison of the two states; because, as a practical question, it is precluded by the overruling tendencies of the age—which no man could counteract except in his own single case, *i. e.*, by refusing to adapt himself as a part to the whole, and thus foregoing the advantages of either one state or the other.*

* The latter part of what is here said coincides, in a way which is rather remarkable, with a passage in an interesting

work of Schiller's which I have since read, (on the Æsthetic Education of Men, in a Series of Letters: vide Letter the 6th). With us in order to obtain the representative word (as it were) of the total species, we must spell it out by the help of a series of individuals. So that on a survey of society as it actually exists, one might suppose that the faculties of the mind do really in actual experience show themselves in as separate a form, and in as much insulation, as psychology is forced to exhibit them in its analysis. And thus we see not only individuals, but whole classes of men unfolding only one part of the germs which are laid in them by the hand of nature. In saying this I am fully aware of the advantages which the human species of modern ages has, when considered as a unity, over the best of antiquity: but the comparison should begin with the individuals: and then let me ask where is the modern individual that would have the presumption to step forward against the Athenian individual, man to man, and to contend for the prize of human excellence? The polypus nature of the Grecian republics, in which every individual enjoyed a separate life, and if it were necessary could become a whole, has now given place to an artificial watch-work, where many lifeless parts combine to form a mechanic whole. The state and the church, laws and manners, are now torn asunder: labour is divided from enjoyment, the means from the end, the exertion from the reward. Chained for ever to a little individual fraction of the whole, man himself is moulded into a fraction; and, with the monotonous whirling of the wheel which he turns everlastingly in his ear, he never develops the harmony of his being: and, instead of imaging the totality of human nature, becomes a bare abstract of his business or the science which he cultivates. The dead letter takes the place of the living understanding: and a practised memory becomes a surer guide than genius and sensibility. Doubtless the power of genius, as we all know, will not fetter itself within the limits of its occupation: but talents of mediocrity are all exhausted in the monotony of the employment allotted to them: and that man must have no common head who brings with him the ungenial labours of life to the cultivation of the

genial.' After insisting at some length on this wise, Schiller passes to the other side of the contemplation, and proceeds thus:—'It suited my immediate purpose to point out the injuries of this condition of the species, without displaying the compensations of nature which have balanced them. But I will now readily acknowledge, that, little as this practical condition may suit the interests of the individual, yet the species could in no other way have been progressive. Partial exercise of the faculties (literally "one-sidedness in the exercise of the faculties") leads the individual undoubtedly into error, but the species into truth:—in no other way than by concentrating the whole energy of our spirits and by converging our whole being so to speak into a single faculty and carrying it by this artificial flight far beyond the limits within which nature has else doomed it to walk. Just as certain as it is that all human beings could never by clubbing their visual powers together, have arrived at the power of seeing what the telescope discovers to the astronomer: just so certain it is, that the human intellect would never have arrived at an analysis of the infinite, or a Critical Analysis of the Pure Reason [the principal work of Kant], unless individuals had dismembered (as it were) and insulated this or that specific faculty, and had thus armed their intellectual sight by the keenest abstraction and by the submersion of the other powers of their nature. Extraordinary men are formed then by energetic and over-excited spasms, as it were, in the individual faculties, though it is true that the equable exercise of all the faculties in harmony with each other can alone make happy and perfect men.' After this statement, from which it should seem, that in the progress of society nature has made it necessary for man to sacrifice his own happiness to the attainment of her ends in the development of his species, Schiller goes on to inquire whether this evil result cannot be remedied; and whether 'the totality of our nature, which art has destroyed, might not be re-established by a higher art'; but this, as leading to a discussion beyond the limits of my own, I omit.

# DIALOGUES OF THREE TEMPLARS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY.

# DIALOGUES OF THREE TEMPLARS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY,

CHIEFLY IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MR. RICARDO.

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## *Original Advertisement, in April,* 1824.

I HAVE resolved to fling my analysis of Mr. Ricardo's system into the form of Dialogues. A few words will suffice to determine the principles of criticism which can fairly be applied to such a form of composition on such a subject. It cannot reasonably be expected that dialogues on Political Economy should pretend to the appropriate beauty of dialogues *as* dialogues—by throwing any dramatic interest into the parts sustained by the different speakers, or any characteristic distinctions into their style. Elegance of this sort, if my time had allowed of it, or I had been otherwise capable of producing it, would have been here misplaced. Not that I would say, even of Political Economy, in the words commonly applied to such subjects, that "*Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri:*" for all things have their peculiar beauty and sources of ornament—determined by their ultimate ends, and by the process of the mind in pursuing them. Here, as in the processes of nature and in mathematical demonstrations, the appropriate elegance is derived from the simplicity of the means employed, as expressed in the "Lex Parcimoniæ" ("Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri fas erat per pauciora"), and other maxims of that sort. This simplicity, however, must be looked for in the order and relation of the thoughts, and in

the steps through which they are trained to lead into each other, rather than in any anxious conciseness as to words; which, on the contrary, I have rather sought to avoid in the earlier Dialogues, in order that I might keep those distinctions longer before the reader from which all the rest were to be derived. For he, who has fully mastered the doctrine of Value, is already a good political economist. Now, if any man should object that in the following Dialogues I have uniformly given the victory to myself, he will make a pleasant logical blunder: for the true logic of the case is this, Not that it is myself to whom I give the victory; but that he to whom I give the victory (let me call him by what name I will) is of necessity myself; since I cannot be supposed to have put triumphant arguments into any speaker's mouth, unless they had previously convinced my own understanding. Finally, let me entreat the reader not to be impatient under the disproportionate length (as he may fancy it) of the opening discussions on Value. Even for its own sake, the subject is a matter of curious speculation; but in relation to Political Economy it is all in all; for most of the errors (and, what is much worse than errors, most of the perplexities) prevailing in this science take their rise from this source. Mr. Ricardo is the first writer who has thrown light on the subject; and even he, in the last edition of his book, still found it a "difficult" one (see the Advertisement to the Third Edition). What a Ricardo has found difficult, cannot be adequately discussed in few words; but, if the reader will once thoroughly master this part of the science, all the rest will cost him hardly any effort at all.

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## INTRODUCTORY DIALOGUE.

(SPEAKERS THROUGHOUT THE DIALOGUES ARE PHÆDRUS, PHILEBUS, AND X. Y. Z.)

*Phœdrus.* This, Philebus, is my friend X. Y. Z., whom I have long wished to introduce to

you; he has some business which calls him into this quarter of the town for the next fortnight; and during that time he has promised to dine with me; and we are to discuss together the modern doctrines of Political Economy; most of which, he tells me, are due to Mr. Ricardo. Or rather, I should say, that I am to become his pupil; for I pretend to no regular knowledge of Political Economy, having picked up what little I possess in a desultory way amongst the writers of the old school; and, out of that little, X. obligingly tells me that three-fourths are rotten. I am glad, therefore, that you are in town at this time, and can come and help me to contradict him. Meantime X. has some right to play the tutor amongst us; for he has been a regular student of the science: another of his merits is—that he is a Templar as well as ourselves, and a good deal senior to either of us.

*Philebus.* And for which of his merits is it that you would have me contradict him?

*Phæd.* Oh, no matter for his merits, which doubtless are past all computation, but generally as a point of hospitality. For I am of the same opinion as M——, a very able friend of mine in Liverpool, who looks upon it as criminal to concede anything a man says in the process of a disputation: the nefarious habit of assenting (as he justly says) being the pest of conversation, by

causing it to stagnate. On this account, he often calls aside the talking men of the party before dinner, and conjures them with a pathetic earnestness not to agree with him in anything he may advance during the evening; and at his own table when it has happened that strangers were present who indulged too much in the habit of politely assenting to anything which seemed to demand no particular opposition, I have seen him suddenly pause with the air of the worst-used man in the world, and exclaim, "Good heavens! is there to be no end to this? Am I *never* to be contradicted? I suppose matters will soon come to that pass that my nearest relations will be perfidiously agreeing with me; the very wife of my bosom will refuse to contradict me; and I shall not have a friend left on whom I can depend for the consolations of opposition."

*Phil.* Well, Phædrus, if X. Y. Z. is so much devoted as you represent to the doctrines of Mr. Ricardo, I shall perhaps find myself obliged to indulge your wishes in this point more than my own taste in conversation would lead me to desire.

*X.* And what, may I ask, is the particular ground of your opposition to Mr. Ricardo?

*Phæd.* I suppose that, like the man who gave his vote against Aristides, because it wearied him to hear any man surnamed *the just*, Philebus is

annoyed by finding that so many people look up to Mr. Ricardo as an oracle.

*Phil.* No: for the very opposite reason; it is because I hear him generally complained of as obscure and as ambitiously paradoxical; two faults which I cannot tolerate: and the extracts from his writings which I have seen satisfy me that this judgment is a reasonable one.

*Phæd.* In addition to which, Philebus, I now recollect something which perhaps weighs with you still more, though you have chosen to suppress it; and *that* is—that you are a disciple of Mr. Malthus, every part of whose writings since the year 1816 (I am assured) have had one origin—jealousy of Mr. Ricardo, "quem si non aliquâ nocuisset, mortuus esset."

*X.* No, no, Phædrus, we must not go so far as *that*; though undoubtedly it is true, that Mr. Malthus has often conducted his opposition in a most vexatious and disingenuous manner.

*Phil.* How so? In what instance? In what instance?

*X.* In this, for one. Mr. Malthus in his "Political Economy" (1820) repeatedly charged Mr. Ricardo with having confounded the two notions of "cost" and "value": I smile by the way when I repeat such a charge, as if it were the office of a Ricardo to confound, or of a Malthus to distinguish: but—

"Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
Longus summa dies, ut non—si voce Metelli
Serventur leges—malint a Cæsare tolli."*

*Phil.* "Imis!" Why, I hope, if Mr. Ricardo may do for the Cæsar of the case, Mr. Malthus is not therefore to be thought the Metellus. "Imis" indeed!

*X.* As to *this*, he is: his general merits of good sense and ingenuity we all acknowledge; but for the office of a distinguisher, or any other which demands logic in the first place, it is impossible to conceive any person below him. To go on, however, with my instance:—this objection of Mr. Malthus's about "cost" and "value" was founded purely on a very great blunder of his own—*so* great, that (as I shall show in its proper place) even Mr. Ricardo did not see the whole extent of his misconception: thus much, however, was plain, that the meaning of Mr. Malthus was—that the new doctrine of value allowed for wages, but did *not* allow for profits; and thus, according to the Malthusian terminology, expressed the cost but not the value of a thing. What was Mr. Ricardo's answer? In the third edition of this book (p. 46), he told Mr. Malthus that, if the

* For the sake of the unclassical reader, I add a prose translation:—Not to such an extent has the lapse of time confounded things highest with things lowest, as that—if the laws can be saved only by the voice of a Metellus—they would not rather choose to be abolished by a Cæsar.

word "cost" were understood in any sense which *excluded* profits, then he did not assert the thing attributed to him; on the other hand, if it were understood in a sense which *included* profits, then of course he did assert it; but then in that sense Mr. Malthus himself did not deny it. This plain answer was published in 1821. Will it be believed that two years after (viz., in the spring of 1823), Mr. Malthus published a pamphlet in which he repeats the same objection over and over again, without a hint that it had ever met with a conclusive explanation which it was impossible to misunderstand? Neither must it be alleged, that Mr. Malthus might not have seen this third edition; for it is the very edition which he constantly quotes in that pamphlet.

*Phæd.* What say you to this, my dear Philebus? You seem to be in perplexity.

*X.* But an instance of far greater disingenuousness is this: Mr. Ricardo, after laying down the general law of value, goes on to state three cases in which that law will be modified; and the extraordinary sagacity with which he has detected and stated these modifications, and the startling consequences to which they lead, have combined to make this one of the most remarkable chapters in his books. Now it is a fact, gentlemen, that these very restrictions of his own law—so openly stated as restrictions by Mr. Ricardo—are brought

forward by Mr. Malthus as so many objections of his own to upset that law. The logic, as usual, is worthy of notice: for it is as if, in a question about the force of any projectile, a man should urge the resistance of the air, not as a limitation of that force, but as a capital objection to it. What I here insist on, however, is its extreme disingenuousness. But this is a subject which it is unpleasant to pursue: and the course of our subject will of itself bring us but too often across the blunders and mis-statements of Mr. Malthus. To recur therefore to what you objected about Mr. Ricardo—that he was said to be paradoxical and obscure—I presume that you use the word "paradoxical" in the common and improper sense, as denoting what has a specious air of truth and subtlety, but is in fact false; whereas I need not tell *you* that a paradox is the very opposite of this—meaning in effect what has a specious air of falsehood, though possibly very true: for a paradox, you know, is simply that which contradicts the popular opinion—which in too many cases is the false opinion; and in none more inevitably than in cases as remote from the popular understanding as all questions of severe science. However, use the word in what sense you please, Mr. Ricardo is no ways interested in the charge: Are my doctrines true, are they demonstrable? is the question for him; if not, let

them be overthrown; if *that* is beyond any man's power, what matters it to him that the slumbering intellect of the multitude regards them as strange? As to obscurity, in general it is of two kinds—one arising out of the writer's own perplexity of thought; which is a vicious obscurity: and in this sense the opponents of Mr. Ricardo are the obscurest of all economists. Another kind——

*Phæd.* Ay, now let us hear what is a virtuous obscurity.

*X.* I do not say, Phædrus, that in any case it can be meritorious to be obscure: but I say that in many cases it is very natural to be so, and pardonable in profound thinkers, and in some cases inevitable. For the other kind of obscurity which I was going to notice is that which I would denominate elliptical obscurity; arising, I mean, out of the frequent ellipsis or suppression of some of the links in a long chain of thought: these are often involuntarily suppressed by profound thinkers, from the disgust which they naturally feel at overlaying a subject with superfluous explanations. So far from seeing too dimly, as in the case of perplexed obscurity, their defect is the very reverse; they see too clearly; and fancy that others see as clearly as themselves. Such, without any tincture of confusion, was the obscurity of Kant (though in him there was also a

singular defect of the art of communicating knowledge, as he was himself aware): such was the obscurity of Leibnitz (who otherwise was remarkable for his felicity in explaining himself): such, if any, is the obscurity of Ricardo; though for my own part I must acknowledge that I could never find any: to me he seems a model of perspicuity. But I believe that the very ground of his perspicuity to me is the ground of his apparent obscurity to some others, and *that* is—his inexorable consistency in the use of words: and this is one of the cases which I alluded to in speaking of an "inevitable obscurity: for wherever men have been accustomed to use a word in two senses, and have yet supposed themselves to use it but in one, a writer, who corrects this lax usage, and forces them to maintain the unity of the meaning, will always appear obscure; because he will oblige them to deny or to affirm consequences from which they were hitherto accustomed to escape under a constant though unconscious equivocation between the two senses. Thus, for example, Mr. Ricardo sternly insists on the *true* sense of the word Value, and (what is still more unusual to most men) insists on using it but in *one* sense: and hence arise consequences which naturally appear at once obscure and paradoxical to M. Say—to Mr. Malthus—to the author of an Essay on

Value*—and to all other lax thinkers, who easily bend their understandings to the infirmity of the popular usage. Hence it is not surprising to find Mr. Malthus complaining ("Polit. Econ.," p. 214) of "the *unusual* application of common terms" as having made Mr. Ricardo's work "difficult to be understood by many people:" though, in fact, there is nothing at all unusual in his application of any term whatever, but only in the steadiness with which he keeps to the same application of it.

*Phil.* These distinctions of yours on the subject of obscurity I am disposed to think reasonable: and, unless the contrary should appear in the course of our conversations, I will concede them to be applicable to the case of Mr. Ricardo: his obscurity may be venial, or it may be inevitable, or even none at all (if you will have it so). But I cannot allow of the cases of Kant and Leibnitz as at all relevant to that before us. For the obscurity complained of in metaphysics, etc., is inherent in the very *objects* contemplated, and is independent of the particular mind contemplating, and exists in defiance of the utmost talents for diffusing light: whereas the objects about which Political Economy is concerned, are acknowledged by all persons to be clear and

* I forget the exact title; but it was printed for Hunter St. Paul's Churchyard.

simple enough, so that any obscurity which hangs over them must arise from imperfections in the art of arranging and conveying ideas on the part of him who undertakes to teach it.

*X.* This I admit: any obscurity which clouds Political Economy, unless where it arises from want of sufficient facts, must be subjective; whereas the main obscurity which besets metaphysics is objective; and such an obscurity is in the fullest sense inevitable. But this I did not overlook; for an objective obscurity it is in the power of any writer to aggravate by his own perplexities; and I alleged the cases of Kant and Leibnitz no further than as they were said to have done so; contending that, if Mr. Ricardo were at all liable to the same charge, he was entitled to the same apology—viz., that he is never obscure from any confusion of thought, but, on the contrary, from too keen a perception of the truth which may have seduced him at times into too elliptic a development of his opinions, and made him impatient of the tardy and continuous steps which are best adapted to the purposes of the teacher. For the fact is, that the *labourers of the Mine* (as I am accustomed to call them), or those who dig up the metal of truth, are seldom fitted to be also *labourers of the Mint*—*i. e.*, to work up the metal for current use. Besides which, it must not be forgotten that Mr.

Ricardo did not propose to deliver an entire system of Political Economy, but only an investigation of such doctrines as had happened to be imperfectly or erroneously stated. On this account, much of his work is polemic; and presumes therefore in the reader an acquaintance with the writers whom he is opposing. Indeed, in every chapter there is an under reference, not to this or that author only, but to the whole current of modern opinions on the subject, which demands a learned reader, who is already master of what is generally received for truth in Political Economy.

*Phil.* Upon this statement it appears at any rate that Mr. Ricardo's must be a most improper book as an elementary one. But, after all, you will admit that even amongst Mr. Ricardo's friends, there is a prevailing opinion that he is too subtle (or, as it is usually expressed, too theoretic) a writer to be safely relied on for the practical uses of legislation.

*X.* Yes. And, indeed, we are all so deeply indebted to English wisdom on matters where theories really *are* dangerous, that we ought not to wonder or to complain if the jealousy of all which goes under that name be sometimes extended to cases in which it is idle to suppose any opposition possible between the *true* theory and the practice. However, on the whole question

which has been moved in regard to Mr. Ricardo's obscurity or tendency to paradox or to over-refinement and false subtlety, I am satisfied if I have won you to any provisional suspension of your prejudices; and will now press it no further —willingly leaving the matter to be settled by the result of our discussions.

*Phæd.* Do so, X.; and especially because my watch informs me that dinner—an event too awfully practical to allow of any violation from mere sublunary disputes—will be announced in six minutes; within which space of time I will trouble you to produce the utmost possible amount of truth with the least possible proportion of obscurity, whether "subjective" or "objective," that may be convenient.

*X.* As the time which you allow us is so short, I think that I cannot better employ it than in reading a short paper which I have drawn up on the most general distribution of Mr. Ricardo's book; because this may serve to guide us in the course of our future discussions.

"Mr. Ricardo's Principles of Political Economy consisted in the second edition of 31 chapters, to which, in the third edition, was added another, making 32. These 32 chapters fall into the following classification:—Fourteen are on the subject of Taxation; viz., the 8th to the 18th*

* The 11th is on Tithes; and the 18th on Poor Rates; but

inclusively, the 22nd, 23rd, and 29th; and these may be entirely omitted by the student, and ought at any rate to be omitted on his first examination of the work. For, though Mr. Ricardo has really been not the chief so much as the sole author of any important truths on the subject of Taxation, and though his 14 chapters on that head are so many inestimable corollaries from his general doctrines, and could never have been obtained without them, yet these general doctrines have no sort of reciprocal dependency upon what concerns Taxation. Consequently, it will greatly lighten the burden to a student, if these 14 chapters are sequestered from the rest of the work, and reserved for a separate and after-investigation, which may furnish a commentary on the first. The chapters on Taxation deducted, there remain, therefore, 17 in the second edition, or 18 in the third. These contain the general principles, but also something more—which may furnish matter for a second subtraction. For in

these of course belong to the subject of Taxation properly defined. The present Lord Chancellor (late Earl of Eldon) said on some cause which came before him about a year ago, that Tithes were unjustly called a Tax; meaning only that Tithes were not any arbitrary imposition of the government, but claimed by as good a tenure as any other sort of property. In this doctrine no doubt the Chancellor was perfectly right; and only wrong in supposing that any denial of that doctrine is implied by the Political Economists in calling Tithes a Tax; which, on the true definition of a Tax (as I shall show hereafter), they certainly are.

most speculations of this nature it usually happens, that, over and above the direct positive communication of new truths, a writer finds it expedient (or perhaps necessary in some cases, in order to clear the ground for himself) to address part of his efforts to the task of meeting the existing errors: hence arises a division of his work into the doctrinal or *affirmative* part, and the polemic* or *negative* part. In Mr. Ricardo's

* *Polemic:*—There is an occasional tendency in the use and practice of the English language capriciously to limit the use of certain words. Thus, for instance, the word *condign* is used only in connection with the word *punishment;* the word *implicit* is used only (unless by scholars, like Milton) in connection with *faith,* or *confidence.* So also *putative* is restricted most absurdly to the one sole word *father,* in a question of doubtful affiliation. These and other words, if unlocked from their absurd imprisonment, would become extensively useful. We should say, for instance, "condign honours," "condign rewards," "condign treatment" (treatment appropriate to the merits)—thus at once realising two rational purposes; viz., giving a useful function to a word, which at present has none; and also providing an intelligible expression for an idea which otherwise is left without means of uttering itself, except through a ponderous circumlocution. Precisely in the same circumstances of idle and absurd sequestration, stands the term *polemic.* At present, according to the popular usage, this word has some fantastic inalienable connection with controversial theology. There cannot be a more childish chimera. No doubt there is a polemic side or aspect of theology; but so there is of *all* knowledge; so there is of *every* science. The radical and characteristic idea concerned in this term *polemic,* is found in our own Parliamentary distinction of *the good speaker,* as contrasted with *the good debater.* The good speaker is he who unfolds the whole of a question in its affirmative aspects,

writings, all parts (as I have already observed) have a latent polemic reference; but some, however, are more directly and formally polemic than the rest; and these may be the more readily detached from the main body of the work, because (like the chapters on Taxation) they are all corollaries from the general laws, and in no case introductory to them. Divided on this principle, the 18 chapters fall into the following arrangement :—

| Chap. | Affirmative Chapters. |
|---|---|
| 1. 4. 30. | on Value; |
| 2. 3. | on Rent; |
| 5. | on Wages; |
| 6. | on Profits; |
| 7. | on Foreign Trade; |
| 19. | on Sudden Changes in Trade; |
| 21. | on Accumulation; |
| 25. | on Colonial Trade; |
| 27. | on Currency and Banks; |
| 31. | on Machinery. |

| Chap. | Negative (or Polemic) Chapters. |
|---|---|
| 20. | on Value and Riches : against Adam Smith, Lord Lauderdale, M. Say; |
| 24. | Rent of Land : against Adam Smith; |
| 26. | Gross and Nett Revenue against Adam Smith; |
| 28. | Relations of Gold, Corn, and Labour, under certain circumstances; against A. Smith; |
| 32. | Rent: against Mr. Malthus. |

who presents these aspects in their just proportions, and according to their orderly and symmetrical deductions from each other. But *the good debater* is he who faces the negative aspects of the question, who meets sudden objections, has an answer for any momentary summons of doubt or difficulty, dissipates seeming inconsistencies, and reconciles the geometrical smoothness of *à priori* abstractions with the coarse angularities of practical experience. The great work of Ricardo is of necessity, and almost in every page, polemic; whilst very often the particular objections or difficulties to which it replies, are not indicated at all—being spread through entire systems, and assumed as *precognita* that are familiar to the learned student.

"Deducting the polemic chapters, there remain 13 affirmative or doctrinal chapters: of which one (the 27th), on Currency, etc., ought always to be insulated from all other parts of Political Economy. And thus, out of the whole 32 chapters, 12 only are important to the student on his first examination; and to these I propose to limit our discussions.".

*Phæd.* Be it so, and now let us adjourn to more solemn duties.

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## DIALOGUE THE FIRST.

### ON THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

*Phæd.* To cut the matter short, X. Y. Z.—and to begin as near as possible to the end—is there any one principle in Political Economy from which all the rest can be deduced? A principle, I mean, which all others presuppose, but which itself presupposes none.

*X.* There is, Phædrus: such a principle exists in the doctrine of Value—truly explained. The question from which all Political Economy will be found to move—the question to which all its difficulties will be found reducible, is this: *What is the ground of exchangeable value?* My hat, for example, bears the same value as your umbrella; double the value of my shoes; four times the

value of my gloves; one-twentieth of the value of this watch. Of these several relations of value, what is the sufficient cause? If they were capricious, no such science as that of Political Economy could exist; not being capricious, they must have an assignable cause: this cause—what is it?

*Phæd.* Ay, what is it?

*X.* It is this, Phædrus; and the entire merit of the discovery belongs to Mr. Ricardo. It is this; and listen with your whole understanding: *the ground of the value of all things lies in the quantity* (but mark well that word "quantity") *of labour which produces them.* Here is that great principle, which is the corner-stone of all tenable Political Economy; which, granted or denied, all Political Economy stands or falls. Grant me this one principle, with a few square feet of the sea-shore to draw my diagrams upon, and I will undertake to deduce every other truth in the science.

*Phæd.* Take it and welcome. It would be impossible for most people to raise a cabbage out of the sea-shore; though the sand were manured by principles the noblest. You therefore, my dear friend, that promise to raise from it—not a cabbage, but a system of Political Economy, are doubly entitled to your *modicum* of sand, and to your principle beside; which last is, I daresay, a very worthy and respectable principle, and not at

all the worse for being as old as my great-grandfather.

*X.* Pardon me, Phædrus: the principle is no older than the first edition of Mr. Ricardo's book: and when you make me this concession so readily, under the notion that you are conceding nothing more than has long been established, I fear that you will seek to retract it, as soon as you are aware of its real import and consequences.

*Phæd.* In most cases, X., I should hesitate to contradict you peremptorily upon a subject which you have studied so much more closely than myself; but here I cannot hesitate; for I happen to remember the very words of Adam Smith, which are ——

*X.* Substantially the same, you will say, as those which I have employed in expressing the great principle of Mr. Ricardo: this is your meaning, Phædrus; and excuse me for interrupting you; I am anxious to lose no time; and therefore let me remind you, as soon as possible, that "the words" of Adam Smith cannot prove any agreement with Mr. Ricardo, if it appears that those words are used as equivalent and convertible at pleasure with certain other words not only irreconcilable with Mr. Ricardo's principle, but expressing the very doctrine which Mr. Ricardo does, and must in consistency, set

himself to oppose. Mr. Ricardo's doctrine is, that A and B are to each other in value as the *quantity* of labour is which produces A to the quantity which produces B; or, to express it in the very shortest formula by substituting the term *base*, as synonymous with the term *producing labour*, *All things are to each other in value as their bases are in quantity.* This is the Ricardian law: you allege that it was already the law of Adam Smith; and in some sense you are right; for such a law is certainly to be found in the "Wealth of Nations." But, if it is *explicitly* affirmed in that work, it is also *implicitly* denied: formally asserted, it is virtually withdrawn. For Adam Smith everywhere uses, as an equivalent formula, that A and B are to each other in value as the *value* of the labour which produces A to the *value* of the labour which produces B.

*Phæd.* And the formula for Mr. Ricardo's law is, if I understand you, that A and B are to each other in value not as the *value*, but as the *quantity* of the labour which produces A to the *quantity* which produces B.

*X.* It is.

*Phæd.* And is it possible, that any such mighty magic can lurk in the simple substitution of *quantity* for *value*? Surely, X., you are hair-splitting a little in this instance, and mean to amuse yourself with my simplicity, by playing off

some logical legerdemain upon me from the "seraphic" or "angelic" doctors.

*X.* The earnestness and good faith of my whole logic and reasoning will soon become a pledge for me, that I am incapable of what you call hair-splitting: and in this particular instance I might appeal to Philebus, who will tell you that Mr. Malthus has grounded his entire opposition to Mr. Ricardo on the very distinction which you are now treating as aërial. But the fact is, you do not yet perceive to what extent this distinction goes: you suppose me to be contending for some minute and subtle shades of difference; so far from *that*, I mean to affirm that the one law is the direct, formal, and diametrical negation of the other: I assert in the most peremptory manner that he who says, "The value of A is to the value of B as the *quantity* of labour producing A is to the *quantity* of labour producing B," does of necessity deny by implication that the relations of value between A and B are governed by the *value* of the labour which severally produces them.

*Phil.* X. is perfectly right in his distinction. You know, Phædrus, or you soon will know, that I differ from X. altogether, on the choice between the two laws: he contends that the value of all things is determined by the *quantity* of the producing labour; I, on the other hand, contend that the value of all things is determined by the

*value* of the producing labour. Thus far you will find us irreconcilable in our difference; but this very difference implies that we are agreed on the distinction which X. is now urging. In fact, so far are the two formulæ from presenting merely two different expressions of the same law, that the very best way of expressing negatively Mr. Ricardo's law (viz., A is to B in value as the *quantities* of the producing labour) would be to say, A is *not* to B in value as the *values* of the producing labour.

*Phæd.* Well, gentlemen, I suppose you must be right: I am sure you are by the logic of kings, and "according to the flesh;" for you are two to one. Yet, to my poor glimmering understanding, which is all I have to guide me in such cases, I must acknowledge that the whole question seems to be a mere dispute about words.

*X.* For once, Phædrus, I am not sorry to hear you using a phrase which in general is hateful to my ears. "A mere dispute about words" is a phrase which we hear daily; and why? Is it a case of such daily occurrence to hear men disputing about mere verbal differences? So far from it, I can truly say that I never happened to witness such a dispute in my whole life — either in books or in conversation; and indeed, considering the small number of absolute synonymes which any language contains, it is

scarcely possible that a dispute on words should arise which would not also be a dispute about ideas (*i. e.*, about realities). Why, then, is the phrase in every man's mouth, when the actual occurrence must be so very uncommon? The reason is this, Phædrus: such a plea is a "sophisma pigri intellectûs," which seeks to escape from the effort of mind necessary for the comprehending and solving of any difficulty under the colourable pretext that it is a question about shadows and not about substances, and one therefore which it is creditable to a man's good sense to decline: a pleasant sophism this, which at the same time flatters a man's indolence and his vanity! For once, however, I repeat that I am not sorry to hear such a phrase in your mouth, Phædrus: I have heard it from you before; and I will frankly tell you that you ought to be ashamed of such a plea, which is becoming to a slothful intellect, but very unbecoming to yours. On this account, it gives me pleasure that you have at length urged it in a case where you will be obliged to abandon it. If that should happen, remember what I have said; and resolve never more to shrink effeminately from the toil of an intellectual discussion, under any pretence that it is a verbal dispute. In the present case, I shall drive you out of that conceit in less time than it cost you to bring it forward. For now, Phædrus, answer me to one

or two little questions which I will put. You fancy that between the expressions "*quantity* of producing labour," and "*value* of producing labour," there is none but a verbal difference. It follows therefore that the same effect ought to take place whether the value of the producing labour be altered or its quantity.

*Phæd.* It does.

*X.* For instance, the production of a hat such as mine has hitherto cost (we will suppose) four days' labour, at 3s. a day: now, without any change whatsoever in the *quantity* of labour required for its production, let this labour suddenly increase in value by 25 per cent.—in this case four days' labour will produce a hat as heretofore; but the value of the producing labour being now raised from 3s. a-day to 3s. 9d., the value of the total labour necessary for the production of a hat will now be raised from 12s. to 15s. Thus far you can have nothing to object?

*Phæd.* Nothing at all, X. But what next?

*X.* Next, let us suppose a case in which the labour of producing hats shall increase, not in value (as in the preceding case), but in quantity. Labour is still at its old value of 3s. a-day; but, from increased difficulty in any part of the process, five days' labour are now spent on the production of a hat instead of four. In this

second case, Phædrus, how much will be paid to the labourer?

*Phæd.* Precisely as much as in the first case: that is 15s.

*X.* True: the labourer on hats received 15s. in the second case as well as in the first; but in the first case for four days' labour, in the second for five: consequently, in the second case, wages (or the value of labour) have not risen at all, whereas in the first case wages have risen by 25 per cent.

*Phæd.* Doubtless: but what is your inference?

*X.* My inference is as follows: according to yourself and Adam Smith, and all those who overlook the momentous difference between the quantity and the value of labour, fancying that these are mere varieties of expression for the same thing, the price of hats ought in the two cases stated to be equally raised—viz., 3s. in each case. If then it be utterly untrue that the price of hats would be equally raised in the two cases, it will follow that an alteration in the value of the producing labour and an alteration in its quantity must terminate in a very different result; and consequently the one alteration cannot be the same as the other, as you insisted.

*Phæd.* Doubtless.

*X.* Now, then, let me tell you, Phædrus, that the price of hats would *not* be equally raised in the

two cases: in the second case the price of a hat will rise by 3s., in the first case it will not rise at all.

*Phæd.* How so, X? How so? Your own statement supposes that the labourer receives 15s. for four days instead of 12s., that is, 3s. more. Now, if the price does not rise to meet this rise of labour, I demand to know whence the labourer is to obtain this additional 3s. If the buyers of hats do not pay him in the price of hats, I presume that the buyers of shoes will not pay him. The poor devil must be paid by somebody.

*X.* You are facetious, my friend. The man must be paid, as you say; but not by the buyers of hats any more than by the buyers of shoes: for the price of hats cannot possibly rise in such a case, as I have said before. And, that I may demonstrate this, let us assume that when the labour spent on a hat cost 12s., the rate of profits was 50 per cent.; it is of no consequence what rate be fixed on: assuming this rate, therefore, the price of a hat would at that time be 18s. Now, when the *quantity* of labour rose from four to five days, this fifth day would add three shillings to the amount of wages; and the price of a hat would rise in consequence from 18s. to a guinea. On the other hand, when the *value* of labour rose from 12s. to 15s., the price of a hat would not rise by one farthing, but would still continue at 18s.

*Phæd.* Again I ask, then, who is to pay the 3s. ?

*X.* The 3s. will be paid out of profits.

*Phæd.* What, without reimbursement?

*X.* Assuredly without a farthing of reimbursement: it is Mr. Ricardo's doctrine that no variation in either profits or wages can ever affect price; if wages rise or fall, the only consequence is that profits must fall or rise by the same sum; so again, if profits rise or fall, wages must fall or rise accordingly.

*Phæd.* You mean then to assert that, when the value of the labour rises (as in the first of your two cases) by 3s., this rise must be paid out of the 6s. which had previously gone to profits.

*X.* I do; and your reason for questioning this opinion is, I am sure, because you think that no capitalist would consent to have his profits thus diminished, but would liberate himself from this increased expense by charging it upon the price. Now, if I prove that he cannot liberate himself in this way, and that it is a matter of perfect indifference to him whether the price rises or not, because in either case he must lose the 3s., I suppose that I shall have removed the sole ground you have for opposing me.

*Phæd.* You are right: prove this, X., "et eris mihi magnus Apollo."

*X.* Tell me then, Phædrus, when the value of

labour rises—in other words, when wages rise—what is it that causes them to rise?

*Phœd.* Ay, what is it that causes them, as you say? I should be glad to hear your opinion on that subject.

*X.* My opinion is, that there are only two* great cases in which wages rise or seem to rise:

1. When money sinks in value; for then, of course, the labourer must have more wages nominally, in order to have the same virtually. But this is obviously nothing more than an apparent rise.

2. When those commodities rise upon which wages are spent. A rise in port wine, in jewels, or in horses, will not affect wages, because these commodities are not consumed by the labourer; but a rise in manufactured goods of certain kinds, upon which, perhaps, two-fifths of his wages are spent, will tend to raise wages: and a rise in certain kinds of food, upon which perhaps the other three-fifths are spent, will raise them still more. Now, the first case being only an apparent rise, this is the only case in which wages can be said really to rise.

* There is another case in which wages have a constant tendency to rise—viz., when the population increases more slowly than the demand for labour. But this case it is not necessary to introduce into the dialogue: firstly, because it is gradual and insensible in its operation; secondly, because if it were otherwise, it would not disturb any part of the argument.

*Phæd.* You are wrong, X; I can tell you of a third case which occurs to me whilst you are speaking. Suppose that there were a great deficiency of labourers in any trade, as in the hatter's trade for instance, that would be a reason why wages should rise in the hatter's trade.

*X.* Doubtless; until the deficiency were supplied, which it soon would be by the stimulus of higher wages. But this is a case of *market* value, when the supply happens not to be on a level with the demand: now, throughout the present conversation, I wish studiously to keep clear of any reference to market value, and to consider exclusively that mode of exchangeable value which is usually called natural value—*i. e.*, where value is wholly uninfluenced by any redundancy or deficiency of the quantity. Waiving this third case, therefore, as not belonging to the present discussion, there remains only the second; and I am entitled to say, that no cause can really and permanently raise wages but a rise in the price of those articles on which wages are spent. In the instance above stated, where the hatter's wages rose from 3s. to 3s. 9d. a-day, some commodity must previously have risen on which the hatter spent his wages. Let this be corn, and let corn constitute one-half of the hatter's expenditure; on which supposition, as his wages rose by 25 per cent., it follows that corn must have risen by

50 per cent. Now tell me, Phædrus, will this rise in the value of corn affect the hatter's wages only; or will it affect wages in general?

*Phæd.* Wages in general, of course: there can be no reason why hatters should eat more corn than any other men.

*X.* Wages in general, therefore, will rise by 25 per cent. Now, when the wages of the hatter rose in that proportion, you contended that this rise must be charged upon the price of hats; and the price of a hat having been previously 18s., you insisted that it must now be 21s.; in which case a rise in wages of 25 per cent. would have raised the price of hats about 16⅔ per cent. And, if this were possible, two great doctrines of Mr. Ricardo would have been overthrown at one blow: 1st, that which maintains that no article can increase in price except from a previous increase in the quantity of labour necessary to its production: for here is no increase in the *quantity* of the labour, but simply in its value; 2nd, that no rise in the value of labour can ever settle upon price; but that all increase of wages will be paid out of profits, and all increase of profits out of wages. I shall now, however, extort a sufficient defence of Mr. Ricardo from your own concessions. For you acknowledge that the same cause which raises the wages of the hatter, will raise wages universally, and in the same ratio—

*i. e.*, by 25 per cent. And, if such a rise in wages could raise the price of hats by 16⅔ per cent., it must raise all other commodities whatsoever by 16⅔ per cent. Now tell me, Phædrus, when all commodities without exception are raised by 16⅔ per cent., in what proportion will the power of money be diminished under every possible application of it?

*Phæd.* Manifestly by 16⅔ per cent.

*X.* If so, Phædrus, you must now acknowledge that it is a matter of perfect indifference to the hatter whether the price of hats rise or not, since he cannot, under any circumstances, escape the payment of the 3s. If the price should *not* rise (as assuredly it will not), he pays the 3s. directly; if the price were to rise by 3s., this implies of necessity that prices rise universally (for it would answer no purpose of your argument to suppose that hatters escaped an evil which affected all other trades). Now, if prices rise universally, the hatter undoubtedly escapes the direct payment of the 3s., but he pays it indirectly; inasmuch as £116: 10s. is now become necessary to give him the same command of labour and commodities which was previously given by £100. Have you any answer to these deductions?

*Phæd.* I must confess I have none.

*X.* If so, and no answer is possible, then I have here given you a demonstration of Mr. Ricardo's

great law—That no product of labour whatsoever can be affected in value by any variations in the *value* of the producing labour. But, if not by variations in its value, then of necessity by variations in its quantity, for no other variations are possible.

*Phæd.* But, at first sight, you know, variations in the *value* of labour appear to affect the value of its product: yet you have shown that the effect of such variations is defeated, and rendered nugatory in the end. Now is it not possible that some such mode of argument may be applied to the case of variations in the *quantity* of labour?

*X.* By no means: the reason why all variations in the *value* of labour are incapable of transferring themselves to the value of its product is this, that these variations extend to all kinds of labour, and therefore to all commodities alike: now that which raises or depresses all things equally, leaves their relations to each other undisturbed. In order to disturb the relations of value between A, B, and C, I must raise one at the same time that I do *not* raise another; depress one, and *not* depress another; raise or depress them unequally. This is necessarily done by any variations in the *quantity* of labour. For example, when more or less labour became requisite for the production of hats, that variation could not fail to affect the value of hats, for

the variation was confined exclusively to hats, and arose out of some circumstance peculiar to hats; and no more labour was on that account requisite for the production of gloves, or wine, or carriages. Consequently, these and all other articles remaining unaffected, whilst hats require 25 per cent. more labour, the previous relation between hats and all other commodities was disturbed—*i. e.*, a *real* effect was produced on the value of hats. Whereas, when hats without requiring a greater quantity of labour were simply produced by labour at a higher value, this change could not possibly disturb the relation between hats and any other commodities, because they were all equally affected by it. If by some application of any mechanic or chemical discovery to the process of making candles the labour of that process were diminished by one-third, the value of candles would fall; for the relation of candles to all other articles, in which no such abridgement of labour had been effected, would be immediately altered: two days' labour would now produce the same quantity of candles as three days' labour before the discovery. But if, on the other hand, the wages of three days had simply fallen in value to the wages of two days—that is, if the labourer received only 6s. for three days instead of 9s.—this could not affect the value of candles; for the fall of wages, extending to all

other things whatsoever, would leave the relations between them all undisturbed; everything else, which had required 9s. worth of labour, would now require 6s. worth; and a pound of candles would exchange for the same quantity of everything as before. Hence it appears that no cause can possibly affect the value of anything—*i. e.*, its exchangeable relation to other things—but an increase or diminution in the quantity of labour required for its production: and the prices of all things whatsoever represent the quantity of labour by which they are severally produced; and the value of A is to the value of B universally as the quantity of labour which produces A to the quantity of labour which produces B.

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Here, then, is the great law of value as first explained by Mr. Ricardo. Adam Smith uniformly takes it for granted that an alteration in the quantity of labour, and an alteration in wages (*i. e.*, the value of labour), are the same thing, and will produce the same effects: and hence he never distinguishes the two cases, but everywhere uses the two expressions as synonymous. If A, which had hitherto required 16s. worth of labour for its production, should to-morrow require only 12s. worth, Adam Smith would have treated it as a matter of no importance whether this change

had arisen from some discovery in the art of manufacturing A which reduced the quantity of labour required from four days to three, or simply from some fall in wages which reduced the value of a day's labour from 4s. to 3s. Yet in the former case, A would fall considerably in price as soon as the discovery ceased to be monopolised; whereas in the latter case we have seen that A could not possibly vary in price by one farthing.

*Phæd.* In what way do you suppose that Adam Smith came to make so great an oversight, as I now confess it to be?

*X.* Mr. Malthus represents Adam Smith as not having sufficiently explained himself on the subject. "He does not make it quite clear," says Mr. Malthus, "whether he adopts for his principle of value the quantity of the producing labour or its value." But this is a most erroneous representation. There is not a chapter in the "Wealth of Nations" in which it is not made redundantly clear, that Adam Smith adopts both laws as mere varieties of expression for one and the same law. This being so, how could he possibly make an election between two things which he constantly confounded and regarded as identical? The truth is, Adam Smith's attention was never directed to the question: he suspected no distinction. No man of his day, or before his day, had ever suspected it; none of the French or Italian writers on Political

Economy had ever suspected it; indeed, none of them has suspected it to this hour. One single writer before Mr. Ricardo has insisted on the *quantity* of labour as the true ground of value; and what is very singular at a period when Political Economy was in the rudest state—viz., in the early part of Charles II.'s reign. This writer was Sir William Petty, a man who would have greatly advanced the science, if he had been properly seconded by his age. In a remarkable passage, too long for quotation, he has expressed the law of value with a Ricardian accuracy: but it was scarcely possible that even he was aware of his own accuracy; for, though he has asserted that the reason why any two articles exchange for each other (as so much corn of Europe, suppose, for so much silver of Peru), is because the same quantity of labour has been employed on their production; and though he has certainly not vitiated the purity of this principle by the usual heteronomy (if you will allow me a learned word) —*i. e.*, by the introduction of the other and opposite law derived from the *value* of this labour —yet it is probable that in thus abstaining, he was guided by mere accident, and not by any conscious purpose of contradistinguishing the one law from the other; because, had *that* been his purpose, he would hardly have contented himself with forbearing to affirm, but would formally

have denied, the false law. For it can never be sufficiently impressed upon the student's mind, that it brings him not one step nearer to the truth to say, that the value of A is determined by the quantity of labour which produces it, unless by that proposition he means, that it is *not* determined by the *value* of the labour which produces it.

To return to Adam Smith; not only has he "made it quite clear" that he confounded the two laws, and had never been summoned to examine whether they led to different results—but I go farther, and will affirm that, if he *had* been summoned to such an examination, he could not have pursued it with any success until the discovery of the true law of Profits. For, in the case of the hats as before argued, he would have said, "The wages of the hatter, whether they have been augmented by increased quantity of labour, or by increased value of labour, must in any case be paid." Now, what is the answer? They must be paid, but from what fund? Adam Smith knew of no fund, nor could know of any until Mr. Ricardo had ascertained the true law of Profits, except Price; in either case, therefore, as Political Economy then stood, he was compelled to conclude that the 15s. would be paid out of the price—*i. e.*, that the whole difference between the 12s. and the 15s. would settle upon the purchaser. But we now know that this will happen only in the case when the

difference has arisen from increased labour; and that every farthing of the difference, which arises from increased value of labour, will be paid out of another fund—viz., Profits. But this conclusion could not be arrived at without the new theory of Profits (as will be seen more fully when we come to that theory); and thus one error was the necessary parent of another.

Here I will pause, and must beg you to pardon my long speeches, in consideration of the extreme importance of the subject; for everything in Political Economy depends, as I said before, on the law of value; and I have not happened to meet with one writer who seemed fully to understand Mr. Ricardo's law, and still less who seemed to perceive the immense train of consequences which it involves.

*Phæd.* I now see enough to believe that Mr. Ricardo is right; and, if so, it is clear that all former writers are wrong. Thus far I am satisfied with your way of conducting the argument, though some little confusion still clouds my view. But, with regard to the consequences you speak of, how do you explain that under so fundamental an error (as you represent it) many writers, but above all Adam Smith, should have been able to deduce so large a body of truth, that we all regard him as one of the chief benefactors to the science?

*X.* The fact is, that his good sense interfered everywhere to temper the extravagant conclusions into which a severe logician could have driven him.* At this very day, a French and an

* The "Wealth of Nations" has never yet been ably reviewed, nor satisfactorily edited. The edition of Mr. Buchanan is unquestionably the best, and displays great knowledge of Political Economy as it stood before the revolution effected by Mr. Ricardo. But having the misfortune to appear immediately before that revolution, it is already to some degree an obsolete book. Even for its own date, however, it was not good as an edition of Adam Smith, its value lying chiefly in the body of original disquisitions which composed the fourth volume; for the notes not only failed to correct the worst errors of Adam Smith (which, indeed, in many cases is saying no more than that Mr. Buchanan did not forestall Mr. Ricardo), but were also deficient in the history of English finance, and generally in the knowledge of facts. How much reason there is to call for a new edition, with a commentary adapted to the existing state of the science, will appear on this consideration: the "Wealth of Nations" is the text-book resorted to by all students of Political Economy. One main problem of this science, if not *the* main problem (as Mr. Ricardo thinks), is to determine the laws which regulate Rent, Profit, and Wages; but everybody who is acquainted with the present state of the science must acknowlege, that precisely on these three points it affords "very little satisfactory information." These last words are the gentle criticism of Mr. Ricardo; but the truth is, that not only does it afford very little information on the great heads of Rent, Profits, and Wages, but (which is much worse) it gives very false and misleading information.

P.S.—September 27, 1854.—It is suggested to me by a friend, that in this special notice of Mr. Buchanan's edition, I shall be interpreted as having designed some covert reflection upon the edition of Adam Smith published by Mr. M'Culloch. My summary answer to any such insinuation

English economist have reared a Babel of far more elaborate errors on this subject; M. Say, I mean, and Mr. Malthus—both ingenious writers, both eminently illogical, especially the latter, with whose "confusion worse confounded" on the subject of value, if reviewed by some unsparing Rhadamanthus of logical justice, I believe that chaos would appear a model of order and light. Yet the very want of logic, which has betrayed these two writers into so many errors, has befriended them in escaping from their consequences; for they leap with the utmost agility over all obstacles to any conclusions which their good sense points out to them as just, however much at war with their own premises. With respect to the confusion which you complain of as still clinging to the subject, this naturally attends the first efforts of the mind to disjoin two ideas which have constantly been regarded as one. But, as we advance in our discussions, illustration and proof will gradually arise from all quarters, to the great principle of Mr. Ricardo which we have just

is, that this whole paper was written in the spring of 1824, *i. e.*, thirty and a-half years ago; at which time, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. M'Culloch had not so much as meditated any such edition. Let me add, that, if I had seen or fancied any reason for a criticism unfriendly to Mr. M'Culloch, or to any writer whatever, I should not have offered it indirectly, but openly, frankly, and in the spirit of liberal candour due to an honourable contemporary.

been considering; besides which, this principle is itself so much required for the illustration and proof of other principles, that the mere practice of applying it will soon sharpen your eye to a steady familiarity with all its aspects.

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## DIALOGUE THE SECOND.

### REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

*Phil.* X., I see, is not yet come: I hope he does not mean to break his appointment, for I have a design upon him. I have been considering his argument against the possibility of any change in price arising out of a change in the value of labour, and I have detected a flaw in it which he can never get over. I have him, sir—I have him as fast as ever spider had a fly.

*Phæd.* Don't think it, my dear friend: you are a dexterious *retiarius*; but a gladiator who is armed with Ricardian weapons will cut your net to pieces. He is too strong in his cause, as I am well satisfied from what passed yesterday. He'll slaughter you: to use the racy expression of a friend of mine in describing the redundant power with which one fancy boxer disposed of another, he'll slaughter you "with ease and affluence." But here he comes.—Well, X., you're just come

in time. Philebus says that you are a fly, whilst *he* is a murderous spider, and that he'll slaughter you with "ease and affluence;" and, all things considered, I am inclined to think he will.

*Phil.* Phædrus does not report the matter quite accurately; however, it is true, that I believe myself to have detected a fatal error in your argument of yesterday on the case of the hat; and it is this:—When the value of labour rose by 25 per cent., you contended that this rise would be paid out of profits. Now up to a certain limit this may be possible; beyond that it is impossible. For the price of the hat was supposed to be 18s.; and the price of the labour being assumed originally at 12s.—leaving 6s. for profits—it is very possible that a rise in wages of no more than 3s. may be paid out of these profits. But, as this advance in wages increases, it comes nearer and nearer to that point at which it will be impossible for profits to pay it; since, let the advance once reach the whole 6s., and all motive for producing hats will be extinguished; and let it advance to 7s., there will in that case be no fund at all left out of which the seventh shilling can be paid, even if the capitalist were disposed to relinquish all his profits. Now, seriously, you will hardly maintain that the hat could not rise to the price of 19s.—or of any higher sum?

*X.* Recollect, Philebus, what it is that I maintain; assuredly the hat may rise to the price of 19s., or of any higher sum, but not as a consequence of the cause you assign. Taking your case, I do maintain that it is impossible the hat should exceed or even reach 18s. When I say 18s., however, you must recollect that the particular sum of 12s. for labour, and 6s. for profits, were taken only for the sake of illustration; translating the sense of the proposition into universal forms, what I assert is, that the rise in the value of the labour can go no further than the amount of profits will allow it: profits swallowed up, there will remain no fund out of which an increase of wages can be paid, and the production of hats will cease.

*Phil.* This is the sense in which I understood you; and in this sense I wish that you would convince me that the hat could not, under the circumstances supposed, advance to 19s. or 20s.

*X.* Perhaps in our conversation on *Wages*, you will see this more irresistibly; you yourself will then shrink from affirming the possibility of such an advance as from an obvious absurdity; meantime, here is a short demonstration of it, which I am surprised that Mr. Ricardo did not use as the strongest and most compendious mode of establishing his doctrine.

Let it be possible that the hat may advance to 19s.; or, to express this more generally, from $x$ (or 18s.)—which it was worth before the rise in wages—to $x + y$; that is to say, the hat will now be worth $x + y$ quantity of money—having previously been worth no more than $x$. That is your meaning?

*Phil.* It is.

*X.* And if in money, of necessity in everything else; because otherwise, if the hat were worth more money only, but more of nothing besides, that would simply argue that money had fallen in value; in which case undoubtedly the hat might rise in any proportion that money fell; but then without gaining any increased value, which is essential to your argument.

*Phil.* Certainly; if in money, then in everything else.

*X.* Therefore, for, instance, in gloves; having previously been worth 4 pair of buckskin gloves, the hat will now be worth 4 pair $+ y$?

*Phil.* It will.

*X.* But, Philebus, either the rise in wages is universal, or it is not universal. If not universal, it must be a case of accidental rise from mere scarcity of hands; which is the case of a rise in *market* value; and that is not the case of Mr. Ricardo, who is laying down the laws of *natural* value. It is therefore universal; but, if universal,

the gloves from the same cause will have risen from the value of $x$ to $x+y$.

Hence, therefore, the price of the hat, estimated in gloves, is$=x+y$.

And again, the price of the gloves, estimated in hats, is$=x+y$.

In other words $H-y=x$.

$$H+y=x.$$

That is to say, $H-y=H+y$.

*Phæd.* Which, I suppose, is an absurdity; and in fact it turns out, Philebus, that he has slaughtered you with "ease and affluence."

*X.* And this absurdity must be eluded by him who undertakes to show that a rise in the wages of labour can be transferred to the value of its product.

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## DIALOGUE THE THIRD.

[Et æquiori sane animo feres, cum hic de primis agatur principiis, si superstitiose omnia examinavi,—viamque quasi palpando singulaque curiosiùs contrectando, lente me promovi et testudineo gradu. Video enim ingenium humanum ita comparatum esse—ut facilius longè quid *consequens* sit dispiciat, quam quid in naturâ *primo* verum; nostramque omnium conditionem non multum ab illâ Archimedis abludere —Δὸς ποῦ σῷ καὶ κινήσω τὴν γήν. Ubi primum figamus pedem, invenire multo magis satagimus, quam (ubi invenimus) ulterius progredi.—*Henricus Morus in Epist. ad Cartesium.*]

### PRINCIPLE OF VALUE CONTINUED.

*Phæd.* In our short conversation of yesterday, X., you parried an objection brought forward by

Philebus in a way which I thought satisfactory. You reduced him to an absurdity, or what seemed such. In fact, I did verily believe that you had slaughtered Philebus; and so I told him. But we have since reconsidered the matter, and have settled it between ourselves that your answer will not do: that your "absurdity," in fact, is a very absurd absurdity. Philebus will tell you why. I for my part shall have enough to do to take care of a little argument of my own, which is designed to meet something that passed in our first dialogue. Now my private conviction is—that both I and Philebus shall be cudgelled; I am satisfied that such will be the issue of the business. And my reason for thinking so is this—that I already see enough to discern a character of boldness and determination in Mr. Ricardo's doctrines which needs no help from sneaking equivocations, and this with me is a high presumption that he is in the right. In whatever rough way his theories are tossed about, they seem always, like a cat, to light upon their legs. But notwithstanding this, as long as there is a possibility that he may be in the wrong, I shall take it for granted that he is, and do my best to prove him so.

*X.* For which, Phædrus, I shall feel greatly indebted to you. We are told of Trajan, that, in the camp exercises, he not only tolerated hard blows, but courted them; "alacer virtute militum,

et lætus quoties aut cassidi suæ aut clypeo gravior ictus incideret. Laudabat quippe ferientes, hortabaturque ut auderent." When one of our theatres let down an iron curtain upon the stage, as a means of insulating the audience from any fire amongst the scenery, and sent men to prove the strength of this curtain by playing upon it with sledge-hammers in the sight and hearing of the public—who would not have laughed at the hollowness of the mummery, if the blows had been gentle, considerate, and forbearing? A "make-believe" blow would have implied a "make-believe" hammer and a "make-believe" curtain. No!—hammer away, like Charles Martel; "fillip me with a three-man beetle;" be to me a *malleus hæreticorum*; come like Spenser's Talus—an iron man with an iron flail—and thresh out the straw of my logic; rack me; put me to the question; get me down; jump upon me; kick me; throttle me; put an end to me in any way you can.

*Phæd.* I will, I will, my dear friend; anything to oblige you; anything for peace. So now tie yourself to the stake, whilst we bait you. And you begin, Philebus; unmuzzle.

*Phil.* I shall be brief. The case of the hat is what I stand upon; and, by the way, I am much obliged to you, X., for having stated the question in that shape; it has furnished me with a very

manageable formula for recalling the principle at issue. The wages alter from two different causes —in one case, because there is the same quantity of labour at a different rate; in another case, because there is a different quantity at the same rate. In the latter case, it is agreed that the alteration settles upon price; in the former case, you affirm that it will *not*: I affirm that it will. I bring an argument to prove it; which argument you attempt to parry by another. But in this counter argument of yours it strikes me that there lurks a *petitio principii*. Indeed, I am sure of it. For observe the course of our reasoning. I charge it upon your doctrine as an absurd consequence—that, if the increase of wages must be paid out of profits, then this fund will at length be eaten out; and, as soon as it is, there will be no fund at all for paying any further increase; and the production must cease. Now what in effect is your answer? Why, that as soon as profits are all eaten up, the production *will* cease. And this you call reducing me to an absurdity. But where is the absurdity? Your answer is in fact an identical proposition; for, when you say, "*As soon as* profits are absorbed," I retort, Ay, no doubt "*as soon*" as they are; but when will that be? It requires no Ricardo to tell us that, *when* profits are absorbed, they will be absorbed; what I deny is, that they ever *can* be absorbed. For,

as fast as wages increase, what is to hinder price from increasing *pari passu*? In which case profits will *never* be absorbed. It is easy enough to prove that price will not increase, if you may assume that profits will not remain stationary. For then you have assumed the whole point in dispute; and after *that*, of course you have the game in your own hands; since it is self-evident that if anybody is made up of two parts P and W, so adjusted that all which is gained by either must be lost by the other, then *that* body can never increase.

*Phæd.* Nor decrease.

*Phil.* No, nor decrease. If my head must of necessity lose as much weight as my trunk gains, and *vice versa*, then it is a clear case that I shall never be heavier. But why cannot my head remain stationary, whilst my trunk grows heavier? That is what you had to prove, and you have not proved it.

*Phæd.* Oh! it's scandalous to think how he has duped us; his "*reductio*" turns out to be the merest swindling.

*X.* No, Phædrus—I beg your pardon. It is very true, I did not attempt to prove that your head might not remain stationary; I could not have proved this *directly*, without anticipating a doctrine out of its place; but I proved it *indirectly*, by showing that, if it were supposed possible, an

absurdity would follow from that supposition. I said, and I say again, that the doctrine of wages will show the very supposition itself to be absurd; but, until we come to that doctrine, I content myself with proving that, let that supposition seem otherwise ever so reasonable (the supposition, namely, that profits may be stationary whilst wages are advancing), yet it draws after it one absurd consequence—viz., that a thing may be bigger than that to which it is confessedly equal. Look back to the notes of our conversation, and you will see that this is as I say. You say, Philebus, that I prove profits in a particular case to be incapable of remaining stationary, by assuming that price cannot increase; or, if I am called upon to prove that assumption—viz., that price cannot increase—I do it only by assuming that profits in that case are incapable of remaining stationary. But, if I had reasoned thus, I should not only have been guilty of a *petitio principii* (as you alleged), but also of a circle. Here then I utterly disclaim and renounce either assumption; I do not ask you to grant me that price must continue stationary in the case supposed; I do not ask you to grant me that profits must recede in the case supposed. On the contrary, I will not have them granted to me; I insist on your refusing both of these principles.

*Phil.* Well, I *do* refuse them.

*Phœd.* So do I. I'll do anything in reason as well as another.* "If one knight give a testril ——" *

*X.* Then let us suppose the mines from which we obtain our silver to be in England.

*Phœd.* What for? Why am I to suppose this? I don't know but you have some trap in it.

*X.* No; a Newcastle coal mine, or a Cornwall tin mine, will answer the purpose of my argument just as well. But it is more convenient to use silver as the illustration; and I suppose it to be in England, simply to avoid intermixing any question about foreign trade. Now when the hat sold for 18s., on Mr. Ricardo's principle, why did it sell for that sum?

*Phil.* I suppose, because the quantity of silver in that sum is assumed to be the product of four days' labour in a silver mine.

*X.* Certainly; because it is the product of the same quantity of labour as that which produced the hat. Calling 20s., therefore, 4 ounces of silver, the hat was worth 9-10ths of 4 ounces. Now, when wages advance from 12s. to 14s., profits (you allege) will not pay this advance, but price. On this supposition the price of the hat will now be—what?

* Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in "Twelfth Night."

*Phil.* Twenty shillings; leaving, as before, 6*s.* for profit.

*X.* Six shillings upon 14s. are not the same *rate* of profit as 6s. upon 12s.; but no matter; it does not affect the argument. The hat is now worth 4 entire ounces of silver, having previously been worth 4 ounces *minus* a tenth of 4 ounces. But the product of 4 days' labour in a silver mine must also advance in value for the same cause. Four ounces of silver, which is that product, will now have the same power or value as 22·22*s.* had before. Consequently the 4 ounces of silver, which had previously commanded in exchange a hat and the 9th of a hat, will now command a hat and 2-9ths, fractions neglected. Hence, therefore, a hat will, upon any Anti-Ricardian theory, manifestly buy 4 ounces of silver; and yet, at the same time, it will not buy 4 ounces by 1-5th part of 4 ounces. Silver and the denominations of its qualities being familiar, make it more convenient to use that metal; but substitute lead, iron, coal, or anything whatsoever—the argument is the same, being in fact a universal demonstration that variations in wages cannot produce corresponding variations in price.

*Phœd.* Say no more, X.; I see that you are right; and it 's all over with our cause, unless I retrieve it. To think that the whole cause of the Anti-Ricardian economy should devolve upon me!

that fate should ordain me to be the Atlas on whose unworthy shoulders the whole system is to rest. This being my destiny, I ought to have been built a little stronger. However, no matter. I heartily pray that I may prove too strong for you; though at the same time I am convinced I shall not. Remember, therefore, that you have no right to exult if you toss and gore me, for I tell you beforehand that you will. And, if you do, that only proves me to be in the right—and a very sagacious person; since my argument has all the appearance of being irresistible, and yet such is my discernment, that I foresee most acutely that it will turn out a most absurd one. It is this: your answer to Philebus issues in this—that a thing A is shown to be at once more valuable and yet not more valuable than the same thing B. Now this answer I take by the horns; it is possible for A to be more, and yet not more valuable than the same thing. For example, my hat shall be more valuable than the gloves; more valuable, that is, than the gloves were; and yet not more valuable than the gloves; not more valuable, that is, than the gloves now are. So of the wages; all things preserve their former relations, because all are equally raised. This is my little argument. What do you think of it? Will it do?

*X.* No.

*Phæd.* Why, so I told you.

*X.* I have the pleasure then to assure you that you were perfectly right. It will *not* do. But I understand you perfectly. You mean to evade my argument that the increase of wages shall settle upon profits; according to this argument, it will settle upon price, and not upon profits; yet again on price in such a way as to escape the absurdity of two relations of value existing between the very same things. But, Phædrus, this rise will be a mere metaphysical *ens*, and no real rise. The hat, you say, has risen; but still it commands no more of the gloves, because they also have risen. How then has either risen? The rise is purely ideal.

*Phæd.* It is so, X.; but that I did not overlook; for tell me—on Mr. Ricardo's principle, will not all things double their value simultaneously, if the quantity of labour spent in producing all should double simultaneously?

*X.* It will, Phædrus.

*Phæd.* And yet nothing will exchange for more or less than before.

*X.* True; but the rise is not ideal for all that, but will affect everybody. A pound of wheat, which previously bought three pounds of salt, will still buy three pounds; but then the salt-maker and the wheat-maker will have only one pound of those articles where before he had two.

However, the difference between the two cases cannot fully be understood, without a previous examination of certain distinctions, which I will make the subject of our next dialogue; and the rather, because, apart from our present question, at every step we should else be embarrassed, as all others have been, by the perplexity attending these distinctions. Meantime, as an answer to your argument, the following consideration will be quite sufficient. The case which your argument respects is that in which wages are supposed to rise? Why? In consequence of a *real* rise in corn or something else. As a means of meeting this rise, wages rise; but the increased value of wages is only a means to an end, and the labourer cares about the rise only in that light. The end is—to give him the same quantity of corn, suppose. That end attained, he cares nothing about the means by which it is attained. Now your ideal rise of wages does not attain this end. The corn has *really* risen; this is the first step. In consequence of this an ideal rise follows in all things, which evades the absurdities of a real rise—and evades the Ricardian doctrine of profits; but then only by also evading any real rise in wages, the necessity of which (in order to meet the real rise in corn) first led to the whole movement of price. But this you will more clearly see after our next dialogue.

## DIALOGUE THE FOURTH.

ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF TWO CELEBRATED DISTINCTIONS IN THE THEORY OF VALUE.

*X.* Now, gentlemen, I come to a question which on a double account is interesting; first, because it is indispensable to the fluency of our future progress that this question should be once for all decided; secondly, because it furnishes an *experimentum crucis* for distinguishing a true knowledge of Mr. Ricardo's theory from a spurious or half-knowledge. Many a man will accompany Mr. Ricardo thus far, and will keep his seat pretty well until he comes to the point which we have now reached—at which point scarcely one in a thousand will escape being unhorsed.

*Phæd.* Which one most assuredly will not be myself. For I have a natural alacrity in losing my seat, and gravitate so determinately to the ground, that (like a Roman of old) I ride without stirrups, by way of holding myself in constant readiness for projection; upon the least hint, anticipating my horse's wishes on that point, and throwing myself off as fast as possible; for what's the use of taking the negative side in a dispute where one's horse takes the affirmative? So I leave it to Philebus to ride through the steeple-chase you will lead him; his be the honour of the day—and his the labour.

*X.* But *that* cannot be; Philebus is bound in duty to be dismounted, for the sake of keeping Mr. Malthus with many others in countenance. For at this point, Phædrus, more than at any other almost, there is a sad confusion of lords and gentlemen that I could name thrown out of the saddle pell-mell upon their mother earth.

*Phil.* "So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing."

I suppose I may add—

"Heighten'd in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory."

Meantime, what is it you allude to?

*X.* You are acquainted, I doubt not, Philebus, with the common distinction between *real* and *nominal* value; and in your judgment upon that distinction, I presume that you adopt the doctrine of Mr. Malthus.

*Phil.* I do; but I know not why you should call it the doctrine of Mr. Malthus; for, though he has re-urged it against Mr. Ricardo, yet originally it belongs to Adam Smith.

*X.* Not so, Philebus; *a* distinction between real and nominal value was made by Adam Smith, but not altogether *the* distinction of Mr. Malthus. It is true that Mr. Malthus tells us ("Polit. Econ.," p. 63), that the distinction is "exactly the same; But in this he is inaccurate; for neither is it exactly the same; nor, if it had been, could Mr. Malthus

have urged it in his "Political Economy" with the same consistency as its original author. This you will see hereafter. But no matter; how do you understand the distinction?

*Phil.* "I continue to think," with Mr. Malthus, and in his words, "that the most proper definition of real value in exchange, in contradistinction to nominal value in exchange, is the power of commanding the necessaries and conveniences of life, including labour, as distinguished from the power of commanding the precious metals."

*X.* You think, for instance, that if the wages of a labourer should in England be at the rate of 5s. a-day, and in France of no more than 1s. a-day, it could not, therefore, be inferred that wages were at a high real value in England, or a low real value in France. Until we know how much food, etc., could be had for the 5s., in England, and how much in France for the 1s., all that we could fairly assert would be, that wages were at a high *nominal* value in England and at a low *nominal* value in France; but the moment it should be ascertained that the English wages would procure twice as much comfort as the French, or the French twice as much as the English, we might then peremptorily affirm that wages were at a high *real* value in England on the first supposition, or in France on the second:—this is what you think?

*Phil.* It is, and very fairly stated. I think

this, in common with Mr. Malthus; and can hold out but little hope that I shall ever cease to think it.

*X.* "Why then, know this,
Thou thinkst amiss;
And, to think right, thou must think o'er again."*

*Phæd.* But is it possible, that Mr. Ricardo can require me to abjure an inference as reasonable as this? If so, I must frankly acknowledge that I am out of the saddle already.

*X.* Reasonable inference? So far from *that*, there is an end of all logic if such an inference be tolerated. *That* man may rest assured that his vocation in this world is not logical, who feels disposed (after a few minutes' consideration) to question the following proposition—viz., That it is very possible for A continually to increase in value—in *real* value, observe—and yet to command a continually decreasing quantity of B; in short, that A may acquire a thousand times higher value, and yet exchange for ten thousand times less of B.

*Phæd.* Why then, "chaos is come again!" Is this the unparadoxical Ricardo?

*X.* Yes, Phædrus; but lay not this unction to your old prejudices, which you must now prepare to part with for ever, that it is any spirit of wilful paradox which is now speaking; for get rid of

* Suckling's well-known song.

Mr. Ricardo if you can, but you will not, therefore get rid of this paradox. On any other theory of value whatsoever, it will still continue to be an irresistible truth, though it is the Ricardian theory only which can consistently explain it. Here, by the way, is a specimen of paradox in the true and laudable sense—in that sense according to which Boyle entitled a book "Hydrostatical Paradoxes;" for, though it wears a *prima facie* appearance of falsehood, yet in the end you will be sensible that it is not only true, but true in that way and degree which will oblige him who denies it to maintain an absurdity. Again, therefore, I affirm that, when the labourer obtains a large quantity of corn, for instance, it is so far from being any fair inference that wages are then at a high real value, that in all probability they are at a very low real value; and inversely I affirm, that when wages are at their very highest real value, the labourer will obtain the very smallest quantity of corn. Or, quitting wages altogether (because such an illustration would drive me into too much anticipation), I affirm universally of Y (that is, of any assignable thing whatsoever), that it shall grow more valuable *ad infinitum*, and yet by possibility exchange for less and less *ad infinitum* of Z (*i. e.*, of any other assignable thing.)

*Phæd.* Well, all I shall say is this—am I in a world where men stand on their heads or on their

feet? But there is some trick in all this; there is some snare. And now I consider — what's the meaning of your saying "by possibility?" If the doctrine you would force upon me be a plain, broad, straightforward truth, why fetter it with such a suspicious restriction?

*X.* Think for a moment, Phædrus, what doctrine it is which I would force upon you; not as you seem to suppose, that the quantity obtained by Y is in the *inverse* ratio of the value of Y; on the contrary, if that were so, it would still remain true that an irresistible inference might be drawn from the quantity purchased to the value of the thing purchasing, and *vice versa.* from the value of the thing purchasing to the quantity which it would purchase. There would still be a connection between the two; and the sole difference between my doctrine and the old doctrine would be this—that the connection would be no longer *direct* (as by your doctrine), but *inverse.* This would be the difference, and the sole difference. But what is it that I assert? Why, that there is no connection at all or of any kind, direct or inverse, between the quantity commanded and the value commanding. My object is to get rid of your inference, not to substitute any new inference of my own. I put, therefore, an extreme case. This case ought by your doctrine to be impossible. If, therefore, it be *not* impossible,

your doctrine is upset. Simply as a possible case, it is sufficient to destroy *you*. But, if it were more than a possible case, it would destroy *me*. For if, instead of demonstrating the possibility of such a case, I had attempted to show that it were a universal and necessary case, I should again be introducing the notion of a connection between the quantity obtained and the value obtaining, which it is the very purpose of my whole argument to exterminate. For my thesis is, that no such connection subsists between the two as warrants any inference, that the real value is great, because the quantity it buys is great, or small, because the quantity it buys is small ; or, reciprocally, that, because the real value is great or small, therefore the quantities bought shall be great or small. From, or to, the real value in these cases, I contend that there is no more valid inference than from, or to, the nominal value with which it is contrasted.

*Phil.* Your thesis then, as I understand it, is this: that if A double its value, it will not command double the quantity of B. I have a barouche which is worth about 600 guineas at this moment. Now if I should keep this barouche unused in my coach-house for five years, and at the end of this term it should happen from any cause that carriages had doubled in value, *my* understanding would lead me to expect double the quantity of

any commodity for which I might then exchange it, whether *that* were money, sugar, besoms, or anything whatsoever. But *you* tell me—no. And *vice versa*, if I found that my barouche at the end of five years obtained for me double the quantity of sugar, or besoms, or political economists, which it would now obtain, I should think myself warranted in drawing an inference that carriages had doubled their value. But you tell me no; "non valet consequentia."

*X.* You are in the right, Phædrus; I *do* tell you so. But you do not express my thesis quite accurately, which is, that if A double its value, it will not *therefore* command double the former quantity of B. It may do so; and it may also command five hundred times more, or five hundred times less.

*Phæd.* O tempora! O mores! Here is my friend X., that in any other times would have been a man of incorruptible virtue; and yet, in our unprincipled age, he is content to barter the interests of truth and the "majesty of plain-dealing" for a brilliant paradox, or (shall I say?) for the glory of being reputed an accomplished disputant.

*X.* But, Phædrus, there could be little brilliancy in a paradox which in the way you understand it will be nothing better than a bold defiance of common sense. In fact, I should be ashamed to give the air of a paradox to so evident a truth as

that which I am now urging, if I did not continually remind myself that—evident as it may appear—it yet escaped Adam Smith. This consideration, and the spectacle of so many writers since his day thrown out at a fault precisely at this point of the chase, make it prudent to present it in as startling a shape as possible; in order that the attention being thoroughly roused, the final assent may not be languid or easily forgotten. Suffer me, therefore, Phædrus, in a Socratic way, to extort an assent from your own arguments—allow me to drive you into an absurdity.

*Phæd.* With all my heart; if our father Adam is wrong, I am sure it would be presumptuous in me to be right; so drive me as fast as possible.

*X.* You say that A, by doubling its own value, shall command a double quantity of B. Where, by A, you do not mean some one thing in particular, but generally any assignable thing whatever. Now B is some assignable thing. Whatever, therefore, is true of A will be true of B?

*Phæd.* It will.

*X.* It will be true therefore of B—that, by doubling its own value, it will command a double quantity of A?

*Phæd.* I cannot deny it.

*X.* Let A be your carriage; and let B stand for six hundred thousands of besoms, which

suppose to express the value of your carriage in that article at this present moment. Five years hence, no matter why, carriages have doubled in value; on which supposition you affirm that in exchange for your barouche you will be entitled to receive no less than twelve hundred thousands of besoms.

*Phæd.* I do; and a precious bagain I shall have of it; like Moses with his gross of shagreen spectacles. But sweep on, if you please; brush me into absurdity.

*X.* I will. Because barouches have altered in value, that is no reason why besoms should *not* have altered?

*Phæd.* Certainly; no reason in the world.

X. Let them have altered; for instance, at the end of the five years let them have been doubled in value. Now because your assertion is this—simply by doubling in value, B shall command a double quantity of A—it follows inevitably Phædrus, that besoms, having doubled their value in five years, will at the end of that time command a double quantity of barouches. The supposition is, that six hundred thousand at present command one barouche; in five years, therefore, six hundred thousand will command two barouches?

*Phæd.* They will.

*X.* Yet at the very same time, it has already appeared from your argument that twelve

hundred thousand will command only one barouche; *i. e.*, a barouche will at one and the same time be worth twelve hundred thousand besoms, and worth only 1-4th part of that quantity. Is this an absurdity, Phædrus?

*Phæd.* It seems such.

*X.* And therefore the argument from which it flows, I presume, is false?

*Phæd.* Scavenger of bad logic! I confess that it looks so.

*Phil.* You confess? So do not I. You die "soft," Phædrus; give me the cudgels, and I'll die "game" at least. The flaw in your argument, X., is this: you summoned Phædrus to invert his proposition, and then you extorted an absurdity from this inversion. But that absurdity follows only from the particular form of expression into which you threw the original proposition. I will express the same proposition in other terms, unexceptionable terms, which shall evade the absurdity. Observe. A and B are at this time equal in value; that is, they now exchange quantity for quantity. Or, if you prefer your own case, I say that one barouche exchanges for six hundred thousand besoms. I choose, however, to express this proposition thus: A (one barouche) and B (six hundred thousand besoms) are severally equal in value to C. When, therefore, A doubles its value, I say that

it shall command a double quantity of C. Now mark how I will express the inverted case. When B doubles its value, I say that it shall command a double quantity of C. But these two cases are very reconcilable with each other. A may command a double quantity of C at the same time that B commands a double quantity of C, without involving any absurdity at all. And if so, the disputed doctrine is established—that a doubled value implies a doubled command of quantity; and reciprocally, that from a doubled command of quantity we may infer a doubled value.

*X.* A and B, you say, may simultaneously command a double quantity of C, in consequence of doubling their value; and this they may do without absurdity. But how shall I know *that*, until I know what you cloak under the symbol of C? For if the same thing shall have happened to C, which my argument assumes to have happened to B (viz., that its value has altered), then the same demonstration will hold; and the very same absurdity will follow any attempt to infer the quantity from the value, or the value from the quantity.

*Phil.* Yes, but I have provided against *that*; for by C I mean any assignable thing which has *not* altered its own value. I assume C to be stationary in value.

*X.* In that case, Philebus, it is undoubtedly

true that no absurdity follows from the inversion of the proposition as it is expressed by you. But then the short answer which I return is this: your thesis avoids the absurdity by avoiding the entire question in dispute. Your thesis is not only not the same as that which we are now discussing; not only different in essence from the thesis which is *now* disputed; but moreover it affirms only what *never* was disputed by any man. No man has ever denied that A by doubling its own value will command a double quantity of all things which have been stationary in value. Of things in that predicament, it is self-evident that A will command a double quantity. But the question is, whether universally, from doubling its value, A will command a double quantity; and inversely, whether universally, from the command of a double quantity, it is lawful to infer a double value. This is asserted by Adam Smith, and is essential to his distinction of nominal and real value; this is peremptorily denied by us. We offer to produce cases in which from double value it shall not be lawful to infer double quantity. We offer to produce cases in which, from double quantity, it shall *not* be lawful to infer double value. And thence we argue, that *until* the value is discovered in some other way, it will be impossible to discover whether it be high or low from any consideration of the quantity com-

manded; and again with respect to the quantity commanded—that, *until* known in some other way, it shall never be known from any consideration of the value commanding. This is what we say; now your "C" contradicts the conditions; "*until* the value is discovered in some other way, it shall never be learned from the quantity commanded." But in your "C" the value is already discovered; for you assume it; you postulate that C is stationary in value; and hence it is easy indeed to infer that, because A commands double quantity of "C;" it shall therefore be of double value; but this inference is not obtained from the single consideration of double quantity, but from *that* combined with the assumption of unaltered value in C, without which assumption you shall never obtain that inference.

*Phæd.* The matter is clear beyond what I require; yet, X., for the satisfaction of my "game" friend Philebus, give us a proof or two *ex abundanti*, by applying what you have said to cases in Adam Smith or others.

*X.* In general, it is clear, that, if the value of A increases in a duplicate ratio, yet if the value of B increases in a triplicate ratio, so far from commanding a greater quantity of B, A shall command a smaller quantity; and if A continually goes on squaring its former value, yet if B continually goes on cubing its former value, then,

though A will continually augment in value, yet the quantity which it will command of B shall be continually less, until at length it shall become practically equal to nothing.* Hence, therefore, I deduce,

1. That when I am told by Adam Smith that the money which I can obtain for my hat expresses only its *nominal* value, but that the labour which I can obtain for it expresses its *real* value —I reply, that the quantity of labour is no more any expression of the real value than the quantity of money; both are equally fallacious expressions, because equally equivocal. My hat, it is true, now buys me $x$ quantity of labour—and and some years ago it bought $\frac{x}{2}$ quantity of labour. But this no more proves that my hat has advanced in real value according to that proportion, than a double *money* price will prove it. For how will Adam Smith reply to him who urges the double money value as an argument of a double real value? He will say—No; non valet consequentia. Your proof is equivocal; for

* The reader may imagine that there is one exception to this case—viz., if the values of A and B were assumed at starting to be $=1$; because in that case the squares, cubes, and all other powers alike, would be $=1$; and thus, under any apparent alteration, the real relations of A and B would always remain the same. But this is an impossible and unmeaning case in Political Economy, as might easily be shown.

a double quantity of money will as inevitably arise from the sinking of money as from the rising of hats. And supposing money to have sunk to 1-4th of its former value, in that case a double money value—so far from proving hats to have risen in real value—will prove that hats have absolutely fallen in real value by one-half; and they will be seen to have done so by comparison with all things which have remained stationary; otherwise they would obtain not double merely, but four times the quantity of money price. This is what Adam Smith will reply in effect. Now the very same objection I make to labour as any test of real value. My hat now obtains $x$ labour; formerly it obtained only one-half of $x$. Be it so; but the whole real change may be in the labour; labour may now be at one-half its former value; in which case my hat obtains the same real price; double the quantity of labour being now required to express the same value. Nay, if labour has fallen to 1-10th of its former value, so far from being proved to have risen 100 per cent. in real value by now purchasing double quantity of labour, my hat is proved to have fallen to 1-5th of its former value; else, instead of buying me only $x$ labour, which is but the double of its former value ($\frac{x}{2}$), it would buy me 5 $x$, or 10 times its former value.

*Phil.* Your objection, then, to the labour price, as any better expression of the *real* value than the money price, would be that it is an equivocal expression, leaving it doubtful on which side of the equation the disturbance had taken place, or whether on both sides. In which objection, as against others, you may be right; but you must not urge this against Adam Smith; because, on his theory, the expression is not equivocal; the disturbance can be only on one side of the equation—viz., in your hat. For as to the other side (the labour), *that* is secured from all disturbance by his doctrine that labour is always of the same value. When, therefore, your hat will purchase $x$ quantity of labour instead of half $x$, the inference is irresistible that your hat has doubled its value. There lies no appeal from this; it cannot be evaded by alleging that the labour may have fallen; for the labour cannot fall.

*X.* On the Smithian theory it cannot; and therefore it is, that I make a great distinction between the error of Adam Smith and of other later writers. He, though wrong, was consistent. That the value of labour is invariable, is a principle so utterly untenable, that many times Adam Smith abandoned it himself implicitly, though not explicitly. The demonstration of its variable value indeed follows naturally from the laws which govern wages; and, therefore, I will not

here anticipate it. Meantime, having once adopted that theory of the unalterable value of labour, Adam Smith was in the right to make it the expression of real value. But this is not done with the same consistency by Mr. Malthus at the very time when he denies the possibility of any invariable value.

*Phil.* How so? Mr. Malthus asserts that there is one article of invariable value; what is more, this article is labour—the very same as that formerly alleged for such by Adam Smith; and he has written a book to prove it.

*X.* True, Philebus, he has done so; and he *now* holds that labour is invariable, supposing that his opinions have not altered within the last twelve months. But he was so far from holding this in 1820 (at which time it was that he chiefly insisted on the distinction between nominal and real value), that he was not content with the true arguments against the possibility of an invariable value, but made use of one, as I shall soon show you, which involves what the metaphysicians call a *non-ens*—or an idea which includes contradictory and self-destroying conditions. Omitting, however, the inconsistency in the idea of *real* value, as conceived by Mr. Malthus, there is this additional error engrafted upon the Smithian definition, that it is extended to "the necessaries and conveniences of life" in general, and no

longer confined exclusively to labour. I shall therefore, as another case for illustrating and applying the result of our dispute,

2. Cite a passage from Mr. Malthus's "Political Economy" (p. 59):—"If we are told that the wages of day-labour in a particular country are, at the present time, fourpence a-day, or that the revenue of a particular sovereign, 700 or 800 years ago, was £400,000 a-year, these statements of nominal value convey no sort of information respecting the condition of the lower class of people in the one case, or the resources of the sovereign in the other. Without further knowledge on the subject, we should be quite at a loss to say, whether the labourers in the country mentioned were starving or living in great plenty; whether the king in question might be considered as having a very inadequate revenue, or whether the sum mentioned was so great as to be incredible.* It is quite obvious that in cases of this kind, and they are of constant recurrence, the value of wages, incomes, or commodities estimated in the precious metals will be of little use to us alone. What we want further is some estimate of a kind which may be denominated real value in exchange, implying the quantity of the

* Hume very reasonably doubts the possibility of William the Conqueror's revenue being £400,000 a-year, as represented by an ancient historian, and adopted by subsequent writers.—*Note of Mr. Malthus.*

necessaries and conveniences of life which those wages, incomes, or commodities will enable the possessor of them to command."

In this passage, over and above the radical error about real value, there is also apparent that confusion which has misled so many writers between *value* and *wealth;* a confusion which Mr. Ricardo first detected and cleared up. That we shall not be able to determine, from the mere money wages, whether the labourers were "starving or living in great plenty," is certain; and that we *shall* be able to determine this as soon as we know the quantity of necessaries, etc., which those wages commanded, is equally certain; for in fact, the one knowledge is identical with the other, and but another way of expressing it; we must, of course, learn that the labourer lived in plenty, if we should learn that his wages gave him a great deal of bread, milk, venison, salt, honey, etc. And as there could never have been any doubt whether we should learn *this* from what Mr. Malthus terms the real value, and that we should *not* learn it from what he terms the money value, Mr. Malthus may be assured that there never can have been any dispute raised on that point. The true dispute is, whether, after having learned that the labourer lived in American plenty, we shall have at all approximated to the appreciation of his wages as to real value; this is

the question; and it is plain that we shall not. What matters it that his wages gave him a great deal of corn, until we know whether corn bore a high or a low value? A great deal of corn at a high value implies wages of a high value; but a great deal of corn at a low value is very consistent with wages at a low value. Money wages, it is said, leave us quite in the dark as to real value. Doubtless; nor are we at all the less in the dark for knowing the corn wages, the milk wages, the grouse wages, etc. *Given* the value of corn, *given* the value of milk, *given* the value of grouse, we shall know whether a great quantity of those articles implies a high value, or is compatible with a low value in the wages which commanded them; but, *until* that is given, it has been already shown that the quantity alone is an equivocal test—being equally capable of co-existing with high wages or low wages.

*Phil.* Why, then, it passes my comprehension to understand what test remains of real value, if neither money price nor commodity price expresses it. When are wages, for example, at a high real value?

*X.* Wages are at a high real value when it requires much labour to produce wages; and at a low real value, when it requires little labour to produce wages; and it is perfectly consistent with the high real value—that the labourer should be

almost starving; and perfectly consistent with the low real value—that the labourer should be living in great ease and comfort.

*Phil.* Well, this may be true; but you must allow that it sounds extravagant.

*X.* Doubtless it sounds extravagant to him who persists in slipping under his notion of value another and heterogeneous notion—viz., that of wealth. But, let it sound as it may, all the absurdities (which are neither few nor slight) are on the other side. These will discover themselves as we advance. Meantime, I presume that, in your use, and in everybody's use of the word value, a high value ought to purchase a high value, and that it will be very absurd if it should not. But as to purchasing a great quantity, that condition is surely not included in any man's idea of value.

*Phil.* No, certainly; because A is of high value, it does not follow, that it must purchase a great quantity; that must be as various as the nature of the thing with which it is compared. But having once assumed any certain thing, as B, it does seem to follow that, however small a quantity A may purchase of this (which I admit may be very small, though the value of A should be very great), yet it does seem to follow, from everybody's notion of value, that this quantity of B, however small at first, must continually increase, if the value of A be supposed continually to increase.

*X.* This may "seem" to follow; but it has been shown that it does not follow; for if A continually double its value, yet let B continually triple or quadruple its value, and the quantity of B will be so far from increasing, that it will finally become evanescent. In short, once for all, the formula is this: let A continually increase in value, and it shall purchase continually more and more in quantity—than what? More than it did? By no means; but more than it would have done, but for that increase in value. A has doubled its value. Does it *therefore* purchase more than it did before of B? No; perhaps it purchases much less; suppose only 1-4th part as much of B as it did before; but still the doubling of A's value has had its full effect; for B, it may happen, has increased in value eight-fold; and, but for the doubling of A, it would, instead of 1-4th, have bought only 1-8th of the former quantity. A therefore, by doubling in value, has bought not double in quantity of what it bought before, but double in quantity of what it would else have bought.

The remainder of this dialogue related to the distinction between "relative" value, as it is termed, and "absolute" value; clearing up the true use of that distinction. But this being already too long, the amount of it will be given hereafter —with a specimen of the errors which have arisen from the abuse of this distinction.

## DIALOGUE THE FIFTH.

ON THE IMMEDIATE USES OF THE NEW THEORY OF VALUE.

*X.* The great law which governs exchangeable value has now been stated and argued. Next, it seems, we must ask—what are its uses? This is a question which you or I should not be likely to ask; for with what colour of propriety could a doubt be raised about the use of any truth in any science? still less, about the use of a leading truth? least of all, about the use of *the* leading truth? Nevertheless, such a doubt *has* been raised by Mr. Malthus.

*Phæd.* On what ground or pretence?

*X.* Under a strange misconception of Mr. Ricardo's meaning. Mr. Malthus has written a great deal, as you may have heard, against Mr. Ricardo's principle of value; his purpose is to prove that it is a false principle; independently of which, he contends that, even if it were a true principle, it would be of little use.*

*Phæd.* Little use? in relation to what?

*X.* Ay, *there* lies the inexplicable mistake: of little use as a *measure* of value. Now, this is a mistake for which there can be no sort of apology; for it supposes Mr. Ricardo to have brought for-

* *Vide* the foot-note to p. 54 of "The Measure of Value."

ward his principle of value as a standard or measure of value; whereas Mr. Ricardo has repeatedly informed his reader that he utterly rejects the possibility of any such measure. Thus (at p. 10, edit. 2nd.), after laying down the *conditio sine quâ non* under which any commodity could preserve an unvarying value, he goes on to say—"of such a commodity we have no knowledge, and consequently are unable to fix on any standard of value." And again (at p. 343 of the same edition), after exposing at some length the circumstances which disqualify "any commodity, or all commodities together," from performing the office of a standard of value, he again states the indispensable condition which must be realised in that commodity which should pretend to such an office; and again he adds immediately—"of such a commodity we have no knowledge." But what leaves this mistake still more without excuse is, that, in the third edition of his book, Mr. Ricardo has added an express section (the sixth) to his chapter on value, having for its direct object to expose the impossibility of any true measure of value. Setting aside, indeed, these explicit declarations, a few words will suffice to show that Mr. Ricardo could not have consistently believed in any standard or measure of value. What does a standard mean?

*Phæd.* A standard is that which stands stil[1]

whilst other things move, and by this means serves to indicate or measure the degree in which those other things have advanced or receded.

*X.* Doubtless; and a standard of value must itself stand still or be stationary in value. But nothing could possibly be stationary in value upon Mr. Ricardo's theory, unless it were always produced by the same quantity of labour; since any alteration in the quantity of the producing labour must immediately affect the value of the product. Now, what is there which can always be obtained by the same quantity of labour? Raw materials (for reasons which will appear when we consider Rent) are constantly tending to grow dearer * by

* "*Constantly tending to grow dearer*:"—To the novice in Political Economy, it will infallibly suggest itself that the direct contrary is the truth; since, even in rural industry, though more tardily improving its processes than manufacturing industry, the tendency is always in that direction: agriculture, as an art benefiting by experience, has never yet been absolutely retrogressive, though not progressive by such striking leaps or sudden discoveries as manufacturing art. But, for all *that*, it still remains true, as a general principle, that raw materials won from the soil are constantly tending to grow dearer, whilst these same materials, as worked up for use by manufacturing skill, are constantly travelling upon an opposite path. The reason is, that in the case of manufacturing improvements, no conquest made is ever lost. The course is never retrogressive towards the worse machinery, or towards the more circuitous process; once resigned, the inferior method is resigned for ever. But in the industry applied to the soil this is otherwise. Doubtless the farmer does not, with his eyes open, return to methods which have experimentally been

requiring more labour for their production; manufactures, from the changes in machinery, which are always progressive and never retrograde, are constantly tending to grow cheaper by requiring less; consequently there is nothing which, upon Mr. Ricardo's theory, can long continue stationary in value. If, therefore, he had proposed any measure of value, he must have forgotten his own principle of value.

*Phil.* But allow me to ask, if that principle is not proposed as a measure of value, in what character is it proposed?

*X.* Surely, Philebus, as the *ground* of value; whereas a measure of value is no more than a *criterion* or test of value. The last is simply a

shown to be inferior, unless, indeed, where want of capital may have forced him to do so; but, as population expands, he is continually forced into descending upon inferior soils; and the product of these inferior soils it is which *gives the ruling price for the whole aggregate of products.* Say that soils Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, had been hitherto sufficient for a nation, where the figures express the regular graduation downwards in point of fertility; then, when No. 5 is called for (which, producing less by the supposition, costs therefore more upon any given quantity), the price upon this last No, 5 regulates the price upon all the five soils. And thus it happens, that, whilst always progressive, rural industry is nevertheless always travelling towards an increased cost. The product of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, is continually tending to be cheaper; but when the cost of No. 5 (and so on for ever as to the fresh soils required to meet a growing population) is combined with that of the superior soils, the quotient from the entire dividend 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, is always tending gradually to a higher expression.

*principium cognoscendi,* whereas the other is a *principium essendi.*

*Phil.* But wherein lies the difference?

*X.* Is it possible that you can ask such a question? A thermometer measures the temperature of the air; that is, it furnishes a criterion for ascertaining its varying degrees of heat; but you cannot even imagine that a thermometer furnishes any *ground* of this heat. I wish to know whether a day's labour at the time of the English Revolution bore the same value as a hundred years after at the time of the French Revolution; and, if not the same value, whether a higher or a lower. For this purpose, if I believe that there is any commodity which is immutable in value, I shall naturally compare a day's labour with that commodity at each period. Some, for instance, have imagined that corn is of invariable value; and, supposing one to adopt so false a notion, we should merely have to inquire what quantity of corn a day's labour would exchange for at each period, and we should then have determined the relations of value between labour at the two periods. In this case, I should have used corn as the *measure* of the value of labour; but I could not rationally mean to say that corn was the *ground* of the value of labour; and, if I said that I made use of corn to *determine* the value of labour, I should employ the word "determine" in

the same sense as when I say that the thermometer determines the heat—viz., that it ascertains it or determines it to my knowledge (as a *principium cognoscendi*). But, when Mr. Ricardo says that the quantity of labour employed on A determines the value of A, he must of course be understood to mean that it *causes* A to be of this value, that it is the *ground* of its value, the *principium essendi* of its value; just as when, being asked what determines a stone to fall downwards rather than upwards, I answer that it is the earth's attraction, or the principle of gravitation, meaning that this principle *causes* it to fall downwards; and, if in this case, I say that gravitation "*determines*" its course downwards, I no longer use that word in the sense of *ascertain*; I do not mean that gravitation *ascertains* it to have descended; but that gravitation has *causatively* impressed that direction on its course; in other words, I make gravitation the *principium essendi*, of its descent.

*Phœd.* I understand your distinction; and in which sense do you say, that Mr. Malthus has used the term Measure of Value—in the sense of a ground, or of a criterion?

*X.* In both senses; he talks of it as "*accounting for*" the value of A, in which case it means a ground of value; and as "*estimating*" the value of A, in which case it means a criterion of value. I mention these expressions as instances; but the

truth is, that, throughout his essay entitled "The Measure of Value Stated and Illustrated," and throughout his "Political Economy" (but especially in the second chapter, entitled "The Nature and Measure of Value"), he uniformly confounds the two ideas of a ground and a criterion of value under a much greater variety of expressions than I have time to enumerate.

*Phil.* But, admitting that Mr. Malthus has proceeded on the misconception you state, what is the specific injury which has thence resulted to Mr. Ricardo?

*X.* I am speaking at present of the uses to be derived from Mr. Ricardo's principle of value. Now, if it had been proposed as a measure of value we might justly demand that it should be "ready and easy of application," to adopt the words of Mr. Malthus ("Measure of Value," p. 54); but it is manifestly not so; for the quantity of labour employed in producing A "could not in many cases" (as Mr. Malthus truly objects) "be ascertained without considerable difficulty;" in most cases, indeed, it could not be ascertained at all. A measure of value, however, which cannot be practically applied is worthless; as a measure of value, therefore, Mr. Ricardo's law of value is worthless; and if it had been offered as such by its author, the blame would have settled on Mr. Ricardo; as it is, it settles on Mr. Malthus, who

has grounded an imaginary triumph on his own gross misconception. For Mr. Ricardo never dreamed of offering a standard or fixed measure of value, or of tolerating any pretended measure of that sort, by whomsoever offered.

Thus much I have said for the sake of showing what is *not* the use of Mr. Ricardo's principle in the design of its author; in order that he may be no longer exposed to the false criticism of those who are looking for what is not to be found, nor ought to be found * in his work. On quitting this part of the subject, I shall just observe, that Mr. Malthus, in common with many others, attaches a most unreasonable importance to the discovery of a measure of value. I challenge any man to show that the great interests of Political Economy have at all suffered for want of such a measure, which at best would end in answering a few questions of unprofitable curiosity; whilst, on the other hand, without a knowledge of

* At p. 36 of "The Measure of Value" (in the foot-note), this misconception as to Mr. Ricardo appears in a still grosser shape; for not only does Mr. Malthus speak of a "concession" (as he calls it) of Mr. Ricardo as being "quite fatal" to the notion of a standard of value—as though it were an object with Mr. Ricardo to establish such a standard; but this standard, moreover, is now represented as being gold. And what objection does Mr. Malthus make to gold as a standard? The identical objection which Mr. Ricardo had himself insisted on in that very page of his third edition to which Mr. Malthus refers.

the *ground* on which value depends, or without some approximation to it, Political Economy could not exist at all, except as a heap of baseless opinions.

*Phœd.* Now, then, having cleared away the imaginary uses of Mr. Ricardo's principle, let us hear something of its real uses.

*X.* The most important of these I expressed in the last words I uttered: *That*, without which a science cannot exist, is commensurate in use with the science itself; being the fundamental law, it will testify its own importance in the changes which it will impress on all the derivative laws. For the main use of Mr. Ricardo's principle, I refer you, therefore, to all Political Economy. Meantime I will notice here the immediate services which it has rendered by liberating the student from those perplexities which previously embarrassed him on his first introduction to the science; I mention two cases by way of specimen.

1. When it was asked by the student what determined the value of all commodities, it was answered that this value was chiefly determined by wages. When again it was asked what determined wages, it was recollected that wages must generally be adjusted to the value of the commodities upon which they were spent; and the answer was, in effect, that wages were determined by the value of commodities. And thus the mind was entangled in this inextricable circle—that

the price of commodities was determined by wages, and wages determined by the price of commodities. From this gross Διαλληλος (as the logicians call it) or see-saw, we are now liberated; for the first step, as we are now aware, is false: the value of commodities is *not* determined by wages; since wages express the value of labour; and it has been demonstrated that not the *value* but the *quantity* of labour determines the value of its products.

2. A second case, in which Mr. Ricardo's law has introduced a simplicity into the science which had in vain been sought for before, is this: all former econonomists, in laying down the component parts of price, had fancied it impossible to get rid of what is termed *the raw material* as one of its elements. This impossibility was generally taken for granted: but an economist of our times, the late Mr. Francis Horner, had (in the "Edinburgh Review") expressly set himself to prove it. "It is not true," said Mr. Horner, "that the thing purchased in every bargain is merely so much labour: the value of the raw material can neither be rejected as nothing, nor estimated as a constant quantity." Now this refractory element is at once, and in the simplest way possible, exterminated by Mr. Ricardo's reformed law of value. Upon the old system, if I had resolved the value of my hat into wages and profits, I

should immediately have been admonished that I had forgotten one of the elements: "wages, profits, and raw material, you mean," it would have been said. Raw material! Well, but on what separate principle can this raw material be valued? or on what other principle than that on which the hat itself was valued? Like any other product of labour, its value is determined by the quantity of labour employed in obtaining it; and the amount of this product is divided between wages and profits as in any case of a manufactured commodity. The raw material of the hat suppose to be beaver: if, then, in order to take the quantity of beavers which are necessary to furnish materials for a thousand hats, four men have been employed for twenty-five days, then it appears that the raw material of a thousand hats has cost a hundred days' labour, which will be of the same value in exchange as the product of a hundred days' labour (previously equated and discounted as to its *quality*) in any other direction; as, for example, if a hundred days' labour would produce two thousand pairs of stockings of a certain quality, then it follows that the raw material of my hat is worth two pairs of such stockings. And thus it turns out that an element of value (which Mr. Horner and thousands of others have supposed to be of a distinct nature, and to resist all further analysis) gives way before

Mr. Ricardo's law, and is eliminated; an admirable simplification, which is equal in merit and use to any of the rules which have been devised from time to time for the resolution of algebraic equations.

Here, then, in a hasty shape, I have offered two specimens of the uses which arise from a better law of value; again reminding you, however, that the main use must lie in the effect which it will impress on all the other laws of Political Economy. And reverting for one moment, before we part, to the difficulty of Philebus about the difference between this principle as a *principium cognoscendi* or measure, and a *principium essendi* or determining ground, let me desire you to consider these two *essential* marks of distinction: 1. that by all respectable economists any true measure of value has been doubted or denied as a possibility: but no man can doubt the existence of a ground of value; 2. that a measure is posterior to the value; for, before a value can be measured or estimated, it must exist: but a ground of value must be antecedent to the value, like any other cause to its effect.

## DIALOGUE THE SIXTH.

ON THE OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW LAW OF VALUE.

*X.* The two most eminent economists* who have opposed the Ricardian doctrines, are Mr. Malthus and Colonel Torrens. In the spring of 1820, Mr. Malthus published his "Principles of Political Economy," much of which was an attack upon Mr. Ricardo; and the entire second chapter of 83 pages, "On the Nature and Measures of Value," was one continued attempt to overthrow Mr. Ricardo's theory of value. Three years afterwards he published a second attack on the same theory in a distinct essay of 81 pages, entitled, "The Measure of Value Stated and Illustrated." In this latter work, amongst other arguments, he has relied upon one in particular, which he has chosen to exhibit in the form of a table. As it is of the last importance to Political Economy that this question should be settled, I will shrink from nothing that wears the semblance of an argument; and I will now examine this table; and will show that the whole of the inferences contained in the seventh, eighth, and ninth columns are founded on a gross blunder in

* The reader must continue to remember that this paper was wrttten in 1824.

the fifth and sixth; every number in which columns is falsely assigned.

MR. MALTHUS'S TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE INVARIABLE VALUE OF LABOUR AND ITS RESULTS.

(From p. 38 of the "Measure of Value Stated and Illustrated." London: 1823.)

N.B.—The sole change which has been made in this reprint of the original Table, is the assigning of names (*Alpha, Beta, etc.*) to the several cases for the purpose of easier reference and distinction.

| CASE. | 1 Quarters of Corn produced by Ten Men. | 2 Yearly Corn Wages to each Labourer. | 3 Yearly Corn Wages of the whole Ten Men. | 4 Rate of Profits under the foregoing Circumstances. | 5 Quantity of Labour required to produce the Wages of Ten Men. | 6 Quantity of Profits on the Advances of Labour. | 7 Invariable Value of the Wages of a given Number of Men. | 8 Value of 100 Quarters of Corn under the varying Circumstances supposed. | 9 Value of the Product of 140 Labour of Ten Men under the Circumstances supposed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Qrs. | Qrs. | Qrs. | Per Ct. | | | | | |
| Alpha.... | 150 | 12 | 120 | 25 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 8·33 | 12·5 |
| Beta..... | 150 | 13 | 130 | 15·38 | 8·66 | 1·34 | 10 | 7·7 | 11·53 |
| Gamma.. | 150 | 10 | 100 | 50 | 6·6 | 3·4 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| Delta.... | 140 | 12 | 120 | 16·66 | 8·6 | 1·4 | 10 | 7·14* | 11·6 |
| Epsilon.. | 140 | 11 | 110 | 27·2 | 7·85 | 2·15 | 10 | 9·09 | 12·7 |
| Zeta .... | 130 | 12 | 120 | 8·3 | 9·23 | 0·77 | 10 | 8·33 | 10·8 |
| Eta..... | 130 | 10 | 100 | 30 | 7·7 | 2·3 | 10 | 10 | 13 |
| Theta.... | 120 | 11 | 110 | 9 | 9·17 | 0·83 | 10 | 9·09 | 10·9 |
| Iota .... | 120 | 10 | 100 | 20 | 8·33 | 1·67 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| Kappa .. | 110 | 10 | 100 | 10 | 9·09 | 0·91 | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| Lambda . | 110 | 9 | 90 | 22·2 | 8·18 | 1·82 | 10 | 11·1 | 12·2 |
| My ..... | 100 | 9 | 90 | 11·1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 11·1 | 11·1 |
| Ny ..... | 100 | 8 | 80 | 25 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 12·5 | 12·5 |
| Xi ..... | 90 | 8 | 80 | 12·5 | 8·88 | 1·12 | 10 | 12·5 | 11·25 |

* This is an oversight on the part of Mr. Malthus, and not an error of the press; for 7·14 would be the value of the 100 quarters on the supposition that the entire product of the ten men (viz. 140 quarters) went to wages; but the wages in this case (Delta) being 120 quarters, the true value on the principle of this table is manifestly 8·33.

SECTION I.

*Phæd.* Now, X., you know that I abhor arithmetical calculations; besides which, I have no faith in any propositions of a political economist which he cannot make out readily without all this elaborate machinery of tables and figures. Under these circumstances, I put it to you, as a man of feeling, whether you ought to inflict upon me this alarming pile of computations; which, by your gloomy countenance, I see that you are meditating.

*X.* Stop, recollect yourself: not I it is, remember, that impose this elaborate "table" upon you, but Mr. Malthus. The yoke is his. I am the man sent by Providence to lighten this yoke. Surrender yourself, therefore, to my guidance, Phædrus, and I will lead you over the hill by so easy a road that you shall never know you have been climbing. You see that there are nine columns; *that*, I suppose, does not pass your skill in arithmetic. Now, then, to simplify the matter, begin by dismissing from your attention every column but the first and the last; fancy all the rest obliterated.

*Phæd.* Most willingly; it is a heavenly fancy.

*X.* Next look into the first column, and tell me what you see there.

*Phæd.* I see "lots" of 150s and 140s, and other ill-looking people of the same description.

*X.* Well, these numbers express the products of the same labour on land of different qualities. The quantity of labour is assumed to be always the same—viz., the labour of ten men for a year (or one man for ten years, or twenty men for half a-year, etc.,). The producing labour, I say, is always the same; but the product is constantly varying. Thus, in the case Alpha the product is one hundred and fifty quarters; in the cases Delta and Epsilon, when cultivation has been compelled by increasing population to descend upon inferior land, the product of equal labour is no more than one hundred and forty quarters; and in the case Iota it has fallen to one hundred and twenty quarters. Now, upon Mr. Ricardo's principle of valuation, I demand to know what ought to be the price of these several products which vary so much in quantity.

*Phæd.* Why, since they are all the products of the same quantity of labour, they ought all to sell for the same price.

*X.* Doubtless; not, however, of necessity for the same money price, since money may itself have varied, in which case the same money price would be really a very different price; but for the same price in all things which have *not* varied in value. The Xi product, therefore,

which is only ninety quarters, will fetch the same real price as the Alpha or Gamma products, which are one hundred and fifty. But, by the way, in saying this, let me caution you against making the false inference that corn is at the same price in the case Xi as in the case Alpha or Gamma; for the inference is the very opposite; since, if ninety quarters cost as much as one hundred and fifty, then each individual quarter of the ninety costs a great deal more. Thus, suppose that the Alpha product sold at £4 a-quarter, the price of the whole would be £600. £600, therefore, must be the price of Xi, or the ninety quarters; but *that* is £6:13:4d. a-quarter. This ought to be a needless caution; yet I have known economists of great name stand much in need of it.

*Phœd.* I am sure *I* stand in need of it, and of all sort of assistance, for I am "ill at these numbers." But let us go on; what you require my assent to, I understand to be this: that all the different quantities of corn expressed in the first column will be of the same value, because they are all alike the product of ten men's labour. To this I *do* assent; and what next? Does any body deny it?

*X.* Yes, Mr. Malthus: he asserts that the value will *not* be always the same; and the purpose of the ninth column is to assign the true

values; which, by looking into that column, you may perceive to be constantly varying: the value of Alpha, for instance, is twelve and 5-10ths; the value of Epsilon is twelve and 7-10ths; of Iota, twelve; and of Xi, eleven and 25-100ths.

*Phœd.* But of what? Twelve and 5-10ths of what?

*X.* Of anything which, though variable, has in fact happened to be stationary in value; or, if you choose, of anything which is not variable in value.

*Phœd.* Not variable! But there is no such thing.

*X.* No! Mr. Malthus, however, says there is; labour, he asserts, is of unalterable value.

*Phœd.* What! does he mean to say, then, that the labourer always obtains the same wages?

*X.* Yes, the same real wages; all differences being only apparently in the wages, but really in the commodity in which the wages are paid. Let that commodity be wheat; then, if the labourer receives ten quarters of wheat in 1800, and nine in 1820, that would imply only that wheat was about 11 per cent. dearer in the latter year. Or let money be that commodity; then, if the labourer receives this century 2s., and next century 3s., this simply argues that money has fallen in value by 50 per cent.

*Phœd.* Why, so it may; and the whole differ-

ence in wages may have arisen in that way, and be only apparent. But then it may also have arisen from a change in the *real* value of wages; that is, on the Ricardian principle, in the quantity of labour necessary to produce wages. And this latter must have been the nature of the change, if Alpha, Iota, Xi, etc., should be found to purchase more labour; in which case, Mr. Ricardo's doctrine is not disturbed; for he will say that Iota in 1700 exchanges for 12, and Kappa in 1800 for 11, not because Kappa has fallen in that proportion (for Kappa, being the product of the same labour as Iota, *cannot* fall below the value of Iota), but because the commodity for which they are exchanged has risen in that proportion.

*X.* He will; but Mr. Malthus attempts to bar that answer in this case, by alleging that it is impossible for the commodity in question (viz., labour) to rise or to fall in that or in any other proportion. If then the change cannot be in the labour, it must be in Alpha, Beta, etc.; in which case Mr. Ricardo will be overthrown; for they are the products of the same quantity of labour, and yet have not retained the same value.

*Phœd.* But to bar Mr. Ricardo's answer; Mr. Malthus must not allege this merely; he must prove it.

*X.* To be sure; and the first seven columns of

this table are designed to prove it. Now, then, we have done with the ninth column, and also with the eighth ; for they are both mere corollaries from all the rest, and linked together under the plain rule of three. Dismiss these altogether ; and we will now come to the argument.

SECTION II.

The table is now reduced to seven columns, and the logic of it is this: the four first columns express the conditions under which the three following ones are deduced as consequences ; and they are to be read thus, taking the case Alpha by way of example:—Suppose that (by column one) the land cultivated is of such a quality that ten labourers produce me one hundred and fifty quarters of corn; and that (by column two) each labourer receives for his own wages twelve quarters; in which case (by column three) the the whole ten receive one hundred and twenty quarters; and thus (by column four) leave me for my profit thirty quarters out of all that they have produced; *i. e.*, 25 per cent. Under these conditions, I insist (says Mr. Malthus) that the wages of ten men, as stated in column three, let them be produced by little labour or much labour, shall never exceed or fall below one invariable value expressed in column seven; and accordingly, by looking down that column, you will perceive

one uniform valuation of 10. Upon this statement, it is manifest that the whole force of the logic turns upon the accuracy with which column three is valued in column seven. If that valuation be correct, then it follows that under all changes in the quantity of labour which produces them, wages never alter in real value; in other words, the value of labour is invariable.

*Phæd.* But of course you deny that the valuation is correct?

*X.* I do, Phædrus; the valuation is wrong, even on Mr. Malthus's or any other man's principles, in every instance; the value is not truly assigned in a single case of the whole fourteen. For how does Mr. Malthus obtain this invariable value of ten? He resolves the value of the wages expressed in column three into two parts; one of which under the name "*labour*," he assigns in column five; the other, under the name "*profits*," he assigns in column six; and column seven expresses the sum of these two parts; which are always kept equal to ten by always compensating each other's excesses and defects. Hence, Phædrus, you see that—as columns seven simply expresses the sum of columns five and six—if those columns are right, column seven cannot be wrong. Consequently it is in column five and six that we are to look for the root of the error; which is indeed a very gross one.

*Phil.* Why, now, for instance, take the case Alpha, and what is the error you detect in that?

*X.* Simply this—that in column five, instead of 8, the true value is 6·4; and in column six, instead of 2, the true value is 1·6; the sum of which values is not 10 but 8; and that is the figure which should have stood in column seven.

*Phil.* How so, X? In column five, Mr. Malthus undertakes to assign the quantity of labour necessary (under the conditions of the particular case) to produce the wages expressed in column three, which in this case, Alpha, are one hundred and twenty quarters. Now you cannot deny that he has assigned it truly; for, when ten men produce one hundred and fifty (by column one)—*i. e.*, each man fifteen—it must require eight to produce one hundred and twenty; for one hundred and twenty is eight times fifteen. Six men and 4-10ths of a man, the number you would substitute, could produce only ninety-six quarters.

*X.* Very true, Philebus; eight men are necessary to produce the one hundred and twenty quarters expressed in column three. And now answer me: what part of their own product will these eight producers deduct for their own wages?

*Phil.* Why (by column two), each man's wages in this case are twelve quarters; therefore the wages of the eight men will be ninety-six quarters.

*X.* And what quantity of labour will be necessary to produce these ninety-six quarters?

*Phil.* Each man producing fifteen, it will require six men's labour, and 4-10ths of another man's labour.

*X.* Very well; 6·4 of the eight are employed in producing the wages of the whole eight. Now tell me, Philebus, what more than their own wages do the whole eight produce?

*Phil.* Why, as they produce in all one hundred and twenty quarters, and their own deduction is ninety-six, it is clear that they produce twenty-four quarters besides their own wages.

*X.* And to whom do these twenty-four quarters go?

*Phil.* To their employer, for his profit.

*X.* Yes; and it answers the condition expressed in column four; for a profit of twenty-four quarters on ninety-six is exactly 25 per cent. But, to go on—you have acknowledged that the ninety-six quarters for wages would be produced by the labour of 6·4 men. Now how much labour will be required to produce the remaining twenty-four quarters for profits?

*Phil.* Because fifteen quarters require the labour of one man (by column one), twenty-four will require the labour of 1·6.

*X.* Right; and thus, Philebus, you have acknowledged all I wish. The object of Mr.

Malthus is to ascertain the cost in labour of producing ten men's wages (or one hundred and twenty quarters) under the conditions of this case Alpha. The cost resolves itself even on Mr. Malthus's principles, into so much wages to the labourers, and so much profit to their employer. Now you or I will undertake to furnish Mr. Malthus the one hundred and twenty quarters, not (as he says) at a cost of ten men's labours (for at that cost we produce him one hundred and fifty quarters by column one), but at a cost of eight. For six men and 4-10ths will produce the whole wages of the eight producers; and one man and 6-10ths will produce our profit of 25 per cent.

*Phæd.* The mistake, then, of Mr. Malthus, if I understand it, is egregious; in column five he estimates the labour necessary to produce the entire one hundred and twenty quarters—which, he says, is the labour of eight men; and so it is, if he means by labour what produces both wages and profits; otherwise not. Of necessity, therefore, he has assigned the value both of wages and profits in column five. Yet in column six he gravely proceeds to estimate profits a second time.

*X.* Yes; and, what is still worse, in estimating these profits a second time over, he estimates them on the whole one hundred and twenty; *i. e.*, he allows for a second profit of thirty quarters; else

it could not cost two men's labour (as by his valuation it does); for each man in the case Alpha produces fifteen quarters. Now thirty quarters added to one hundred and twenty, are one hundred and fifty. But this is the *product* of ten men, and not the *wages* of ten men; which is the amount offered for valuation in column three, and which is all that column seven professes to have valued.

SECTION III.

*Phæd.* I am satisfied, X. But Philebus seems perplexed. Make all clear, therefore, by demonstrating the same result in some other way. With your adroitness, it can cost you no trouble to treat us with a little display of dialectical skirmishing. Show us a specimen of manœuvring; enfilade him; take him in front and rear; and do it rapidly, and with a light horseman's elegance.

*X.* If you wish for variations, it is easy to give them. In the first argument, what I depended on was this—that the valuation was inaccurate. Now, then, *secondly*, suppose the valuation to be accurate, in this case we must still disallow it to Mr. Malthus; for, in columns five and six, he values by the quantity of producing labour; but that is the Ricardian principle of valuation, which is the very principle that he writes to overthrow.

*Phæd.* This may seem a good *quoad hominem* argument. Yet surely any man may use the

principle of his antagonist in order to extort a particular result from it ?

*X.* He may; but in that case will the result be true, or will it not be true ?

*Phæd.* If he denies the principle, he is bound to think the result *not* true; and he uses it as a *reductio ad absurdum.*

*X.* Right; but now in this case Mr. Malthus presents the result as a truth.

*Phil.* Yes, X; but observe, the result is the direct contradiction of Mr. Ricardo's result. The quantities of column first vary in value by column the last; but the result, in Mr. Ricardo's hands, is —that they do *not* vary in value,

*X.* Still, if in Mr. Malthus's hands the principle is made to yield a truth, then at any rate the principle is itself true ; and all that will be proved against Mr. Ricardo is, that he applied a sound principle unskilfully. But Mr. Malthus writes a book to prove that the principle is *not* sound.

*Phæd.* Yes, and to substitute another.

*X.* True; which other, I go on *thirdly* to say, is actually employed in this table. On which account it is fair to say, that Mr. Malthus is a *third* time refuted. For, if two inconsistent principles of valuation be employed, then the table will be vicious because heteronymous.

*Phil. Negatur minor.*

*X.* I prove the minor (viz., that two inconsis-

tent principles *are* employed) by column the ninth; and hence also I deduce a *fourth* and a *fifth* refutation of the table.

*Phæd. Euge!* Now this is a pleasant skirmishing.

*X.* For in column the last, I say that the principle of valuation employed is different from that employed in columns five and six. Upon which I offer you this dilemma: it is—or it is not; choose.

*Phil.* Suppose I say, it is ?

*X.* In that case, the result of this table is a case of *idem per idem;* a pure childish tautology.

*Phil.* Suppose I say, it is not ?

*X.* In that case, the result of this table is false.

*Phil.* Demonstrate.

*X.* I say that the principle of valuation employed in column nine is, not the quantity of *producing* labour, but the quantity of labour *commanded.* Now, if it is, then the result is childish tautology, as being identical with the premises. For it is already introduced into the premises as one of conditions of the case Alpha (viz., into column two), that twelve quarters of corn shall command the labour of one man; which being premised, it is a mere variety of expression for the very same fact to tell us in column nine, that the one hundred and fifty quarters of column the first shall command twelve men and 5-10ths of a man; for one

hundred and forty-four, being twelve times twelve, will of course command twelve men, and the remainder of six quarters will of course command the half of a man. And it is most idle to employ the elaborate machinery of nine columns to deduce, as a learned result, what you have already put into the premises, and postulated amongst the conditions.

*Phæd.* This will therefore destroy Mr. Malthus's theory a fourth time.

*X.* Then, on the other hand, if the principle of valuation employed in column nine is the same as that employed in columns five and six, this principle must be the quantity of producing labour, and not the quantity of labour commanded. But in that case the result will be false. For column nine values column the first. Now, if the one hundred and fifty quarters of case Alpha are truly valued in column first, then they are falsely valued in column the last; and, if truly valued in column the last, then falsely valued in column the first. For by column the last, the one hundred and fifty quarters are produced by the labour of twelve and a-half men; but it is the very condition of column the first, that the one hundred and fifty quarters are produced by ten men.

*Phæd.* (*laughing*). This is too hot to last. Here we have a fifth refutation. Can't you give us a sixth, X?

*X.* If you please. Supposing Mr. Malthus's theory to be good, it shall be impossible for anything whatsoever at any time to vary in value. For how shall it vary? Because the *quantity* of producing labour varies? But *that* is the very principle which he is writing to overthrow. Shall it vary, then, because the *value* of the producing labour varies? But *that* is impossible on the system of Mr. Malthus; for, according to this system, the value of labour is invariable.

*Phil.* Stop, I've thought of a dodge. The thing shall vary, because the *quantity* of labour commanded shall vary.

*X.* But how shall *that* vary? A can never command a greater quantity of labour, or of anything which is presumed to be of invariable value, until A itself be of a higher value. To command an altered quantity of labour, which (*on any theory*) must be the *consequence* of altered value, can never be the *cause* of altered value. No alterations of labour, therefore, whether as to quantity or value, shall ever account for the altered value of A; for, according to Mr. Malthus, they are either insufficient on the one hand, or impossible on the other.

*Phil.* Grant this, yet value may still vary; for if labour be invariable, still profits may vary.

*X.* So that, if A rise, it will irresistibly argue profits to have risen?

*Phil.* It will; because no other element *can* have risen.

*X.* But now column eight assigns the value of a uniform quantity of corn—viz., one hundred quarters. In case Alpha, one hundred quarters are worth 8·33. What are one hundred quarters worth in the case Iota?

*Phil.* They are worth 10.

*X.* And *that* is clearly more. Now, if A have risen, by your own admission I am entitled to infer that profits have risen: but what are profits in the case Iota?

*Phil.* By column four they are 20 per cent.

*X.* And what in the case Alpha?

*Phil.* By column four, 25 per cent.

*X.* Then profits have fallen in the case Iota; but, because A has risen in case Iota from 8·33 to 10, it is an irresistible inference on your theory that profits ought to have risen.

*Phæd.* (*laughing.*) Philebus, this is sharp practice; go on X., and skirmish with him a little more in this voltigeur style.

N.B—This little paper wears a fragmentary appearance; for the explanation of which the reader is referred to the Preface.

THE END.

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